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NEWS AND VIEWS

The news items originated with the National Catholic News Service, and on quick reading it seemed innocent enough, hardly worth more than the two paragraphs NC allotted it. The item told of eight students from St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie (the major seminary for the Archdiocese of New York), who are attending a nine-week chaplain-officer basic course at the U.S. Army Chaplain School at Fort Hamilton, N.Y.

"The seminarians are the first candidates for the priesthood to enter a special army program designed to introduce theological students to the military chapplaincy," the news item said. "The program's purpose is to allow divinity students an opportunity to gain some army background, in the hope that they may enter the army as chaplains after ordination, or at least remain in the Army reserve."

Well, all armies need chaplains, we suppose, and a warring nation like our own needs an especially large number. So the surface impulse might be to deem the idea a good one. Except, of course, it isn't.

It isn't, because the Dunwoodie experiment underscores once again the ready and unquestioning acceptance of things military by the American Church, even when the acceptance grossly encroaches upon that tightest of Church disciplines, seminary formation.

It isn't, because there is so much coolness, if not outright hostility, to the introduction into the seminary experience of counterbalancing volunteer service programs. Recall the order from Rome several months back killing the plan of the Northwest Jesuit Province to allow its seminarians to spend the Summer with VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America).

The Jesuit experience was not unique. The whole history of the "citizen sabbatical" proposal has consisted of one "no" after another from Church officials when group after group of seminarians or religious has sought to link seminary formation to humanitarian public service programs, like VISTA, the Peace Corps and others.

It is only a small secret that during the last session of Vatican II, Sargent Shriver approached the U.S. Bishops through a top aide, Joseph English, with a plan to involve seminarians in Peace Corps work among the poor and oppressed. The bishops listened politely and formed an ad hoc committee to "study the proposal." Nothing came of the study, a detail which confirmed the prediction of the cynics (or realists?) who from the beginning claimed the real purpose of the ad hoc committee was to bury the idea as quietly as possible.

(While the bishops' "study" of the proposal was proceeding, an American Jesuit drew up an article favoring the idea and was about to publish it in *Ave Maria* when he was warned to retrieve the article and forget about it. He did.)

Why did the bishops fail to respond to the Shriver-English proposal? Partially because they were unconvinced about the wisdom of the proposal (who ever heard of sending seminarians into slums and ghettos as part of their training?); partially because they regarded the proposal as a gimmick to sell the Peace Corps. One bishop, who considered the whole plan silly, remarked: "Until West Point and Annapolis let their students go off for a couple years of Peace Corps service, we don't want to hear about seminarians going into it."

So the bishops didn't hear of it. And if, as a result, the Peace Corps was a loser, no less so was the American seminary system. It is something for the analysts to keep in mind in assessing how lack of purposefulness has depleted seminary populations.

•

The Committee of Responsibility, the non-profit organization concerned about the innocent victims of the war in Vietnam, finds itself still hung-up in its attempt to bring seriously injured Vietnamese children to the U.S. for medical treatment and therapy unavailable in their own country.

A report by two COR physicians—Dr. Herbert L. Needleman, Philadelphia psychiatrist, and Dr. Frank Ervin, Harvard Medical School—itemizes a complicated set of conditions laid down by South Vietnam's Ministry of Health before children can be removed to the U.S. for treatment. To quote the doctors, the conditions "would be difficult to meet in the United States, but in a country savagely dislocated by the war, they are next to impossible."

Drs. Needleman and Ervin sum up: "It is fair to say that the sense of urgency we felt about the children we saw and the immediate cases we presented [for treatment in the U.S.] was not met with evidence of an equal sense of immediacy on the part of the Ministry."

Curiously, but hardly coincidentally, the same red tape is not being encountered by Swiss and British humanitarian organizations. For instance, two weeks before the COR physicians visited Vietnam, Terre des Hommes, a Swiss agency, received permission to fly five war-injured children to Europe for treatment. (One was a case referred to Terre des Hommes by COR: a child whose jaw had been completely shot away.)

Not a few feel that the apparent lack of regard for these children on the part of the South Vietnamese government is really the result of subterfuge on the part of the U.S. State Department. Robert Riley, a *Honolulu Advertiser* staffer, quotes Mrs. Louise McDonald, co-chairman of Hawaii's Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam: "Our government just doesn't want Americans to see these children. Over 200 children have been treated in Europe, but not a single one has been treated here."

Mrs. McDonald contends that the State Department offer in July to provide free air transportation to the U.S. for war-injured Vietnamese children was only a tactic to get the government "off the hook." She believes the State Department has known all along that there is no chance of the children coming to U.S. medical centers.

To date the record bears her out.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Theology and the Draft

Santa Clara, Calif.

To the Editors: Michael Novak's treatment of theological assumptions in draft procedures (July 28) shows the hopeless absurdities in requiring reflective young men to implicitly subscribe to a theology derived from a "folk religion." There are some other, related features of this situation, of equal importance, which he did not mention.

For example, it should be noted that the SSS form 150, whatever its theological assumptions, has the added feature of requiring a reasonably literate and informed response to the questions. If it should happen that the claimant is pious and sincere but untheological or illiterate (even semi-literate), he is handicapped by his inability to *understand* the import of the questions, much less coherently answer them. Thus the uneducated or inarticulate CO, more likely for induction since he is without opportunities for school deferment, is discriminated against for his inability to state his claim even in terms of "folk religion."

Further, however out of date the implicit theology may be, the CO's problems are greatly complicated if he should actually be inducted before his commitment takes shape or before he decides to bear the consequences of his moral commitment. Not recognizing that there are really two decisions for the inductee to make, one moral the other practical (that the war is wrong and that he will seek CO status or defiance of draft laws), the regulation of the various services prohibit a man from applying for CO status if he held the view of opposition to war before he entered the service but did not formally claim it.

This creates a dilemma, heavily loading the situation against the claimant. Either he was a CO before entering the service or not. If he was, but did not claim it, his application is not considered. If he was not committed (e.g.,

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AN ELECTRONIC WALL, YET

Even in its most idealized articulation, United States involvement in Vietnam was never offered on the level of the sublime. Hence it is admittedly straining to invoke the "sublime-to-ridiculous" cliché, as the U.S. slips deeper into the morass of involvement and this in turn takes its toll on the good sense of responsible citizens. Except how else does one describe the stepping out of character and the thought devolution of so many individuals, all on the subject of Vietnam, than with the word ridiculous?

George Romney's brainwashing outburst (which pretty much takes care of him as a presidential nominee) is only the most startling example of the perverse power of Vietnam to blunt the sensibilities of usually thoughtful people. There are others. At the American Legion convention, Marine Corps Commandant Wallace M. Greene turns sociologist and exclaims that Vietnam is more important than the plight of American cities; back from overseeing the Vietnamese elections, San Antonio's Archbishop Robert E. Lucey turns military expert, denounces talk of stalemate and demands that the press "kill once and for all" the impression that a stalemate exists in the war. We could go on.

In the midst of this chaos, Secretary of Defense McNamara announces plans for an electronic wall to seal North from South Vietnam. The temptation is to lump that announcement with the foregoing, except that the McNamara proposal has sober implications both for the image of the Administration and ultimately for the course of the war in Vietnam.

The electronic wall idea has obvious roots in opinions expressed by Mr. McNamara before the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee—specifically, that the air war over North Vietnam is in many respects futile and that more in-

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tensified bombing will not materially shorten hostilities. Disclaimers notwithstanding, this viewpoint places Mr. McNamara substantially at variance with stated Administration conviction on the subject, and raises some interesting points for speculation.

One wonders, for instance, to what extent the Administration, in going along with the electronic barrier, is indulging Mr. NcNamara and buying his quiet as a cabinet officer in order to continue to present a public appearance of "team harmony" for its policies? One wonders, too, to what extent the electronic wall is Mr. McNamara's attempt to forestall the lifting of restraints on U.S. bombers, as was asked by the Senate subcommittee and which is being continually urged by military advisors.

We suspect that there are elements from both questions in the electronic wall decision; we suspect also that Mr. McNamara is bound to lose on all accounts. For in its evaluation of the electronic wall idea, the military, this once, seems to be dead right: it is sheer gadgetry, and gadgetry will neither win the war nor effectively halt the flow of men and arms from the North. The potential consequences of this, so far as Mr. McNamara and the war are concerned, are frightening to ponder: for to the degree that his wall is a failure, Mr. McNamara will stand discredited as a military strategist; and to the degree he is discredited, what restraint that he has been able to exercise over the military will be stripped away. Given the hawkishness of the Johnson team, this could mean the freeing of the military to escalate deliberate bombing to the centers of Hanoi and Haiphong, and to Haiphong harbor proper. Then the big target could be the dikes, and once they were bombed the United States would, in fact, be about the business of genocide. McNamara's wall increases rather than lessens these dangers.

Much as we prefer not to think so, Mr. McNamara appears to have stepped flat-footed into the booby trap which, as Mary McCarthy cogently points out, the Administration sets for critics of its policies; that is, to sit on its "mountain of errors" and silence critics by inviting them to come up with solutions for ending the war. For reasons good and bad, Mr. McNamara has taken the bait and thus places on the line whatever effectiveness he has had as a moderator of Administration tendencies.

More important still, by settling for a $1-billion gimmick, Mr. McNamara sacrifices the opportunity to project the conclusions of his subcommittee testimony. Such, of course, would mean a break with the Administration, but Mr. McNamara has been rumored for some time to be near that point. His subcommittee testimony seemed a step in that direction. But Mr. McNamara stopped short of any serious confrontation of the Administration, a matter that disappoints all who see in the Administration an imperviousness to criticism and who are beginning to feel the only protest the Administration may respond to is the public dissent of a key "team" member. Mr. McNamara has been the great hope. He has let one chance pass, but there will be others. Hopefully, Mr. McNamara will seize one of them to demonstrate the transcendence of humanitarian loyalties.

Laying Foundations for a Theology of Renewal

Toronto

The first thing that impressed participants of the Congress of Theology, held on the campus of Toronto University, was the atmosphere of serenity and beauty in which took place the serious probing of the celebrated theologians. The organization of the Congress approached perfection. The weather was unusually pleasant for the season, and the City of Toronto, renewed in many ways over the last decade, revealed itself as a beautiful meeting place. During the Congress, by a strange coincidence, hundreds of hippies held daily love-ins at Queen's park in the university and demanded that Yorkville, their part of the city, be preserved from motor traffic.

The Congress was international. The great ones had come from all over the world. Rahner and Metz from Germany, Schillebeeckx from Holland, Chenu and de Lubac from France (Father Congar, who had been lecturing in South America, fell ill on the way to the Congress), Aubert from Belgium, Häring and Moeller from Rome, Lonergan from Toronto. Speaking at the Congress were Cardinals Suenens, Léger, Koenig and Garonne. Over 40 speakers addressed the Congress in the brief period of four days. Since several lectures were always given simultaneously to different audiences, the participants attended a limited part of the program and were thus prevented from being overwhelmed with material.

The Congress was academic. The presentations were lectures properly so-called. A panel of participants, chosen for each lecture, would address questions to the speakers to make them reveal more of their reflections and their hopes. The Congress did not intend to deal specifically with the practical problems of priests and the laity. The subject of the Congress was theology, in fact, the theology of renewal. In other words, the Congress intended to deal with the doctrinal basis of renewal.

STAFF ADDITIONS

This week *Commonweal* is happy to announce the addition to its staff of Oona Sullivan, as associate editor. Mrs. Sullivan was formerly managing editor of *Jubilee*.

Also joining the staff as an editorial assistant is Jonathan Eisen, a doctoral candidate at the University of Edinburgh, and former editor of *The Activist*.

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Priests and laymen who attended the Congress hoping to listen to a treatment of their pastoral problems and looking forward to programmed participation in the discussion may have been disappointed. While there is undoubtedly a need for the latter kind of congress, there is an equal need for a strictly theological discussion of the basis of belief and renewal.

The organizer of the Congress, the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in the University of Toronto, gave an example of theological generosity that is significant for the future of Catholic intellectual life. While the Institute stands for a rather traditional approach to philosophical and therefore theological issues, witnessed at the Congress by the lectures of its famous members Gilson and Pegis, the Institute was willing to sponsor and promote the pluralism of philosophies and theologies that characterizes the Catholic Church of our day. The differences in theological method was presented, dramatically and with scholarly precision, by Bernard Lonergan, a distinguished representative of a modern approach, who contrasted the classical theology with the more empirical theologies that are being elaborated in the present.

Since the subject of the lectures was not planned in detail, but depended on the inclination of the speakers, the Congress turned out to be a kind of laboratory for detecting the principal issues that preoccupy Catholic theologians today. The issues have moved far beyond those examined at Vatican II. As I see it, the principal issue turned out to be the Church's relationship to a secularized world. Almost every speaker dealt with the secularization of life. Because the world has changed, the Church must rethink her own relationship to the world; but entering into dialogue with the world, the Church finds that she is herself changing. There is no dialogue which does not change the two partners. What is disquieting is that as we enter into a dialogue we do not know beforehand exactly how the dialogue will affect us. To want to know beforehand what the Church will be like through dialogue, would be a way of preventing her from opening herself to the dynamics of redemption implicit in conversation and cooperation.

One of the demands made on the Church by the secularization of life is to express her message in a language which modern man can understand. This points to the second central issue, related to the first but more profound, that preoccupied a great number of the speakers —even though no one lecture was given precisely on the subject—namely, the problem of hermeneutics. By what principles do we interpret doctrinal statements? All Catholics believe the Scriptures, the creeds, the liturgy and the defined teaching of the Church, but if we ask Catholics what they mean by the doctrines they profess, the answers would be quite varied. We must study the grave question of how we can and must interpret sentences of the past. This is a problem, by the way, which the magisterium cannot solve in a hurry. A hermeneutics has not been developed in the Church. The scholars of the Catholic world will have to collaborate for many years to come to make available for us a hermeneutics of the faith declared by the Church.

Some of the lectures shied away from the critical issues. The treatment of the relation of hierarchy and charisms and of the priest of tomorrow, to give two examples, did not face up to the real situation in the Church. The biblical understanding of renewal was almost totally neglected. But the lectures dealing with the fundamental questions of revelation and man's reflection on this revelation, introduced the audience to the deep issue which, though theoretical, will have far-reaching effects on the ordinary life of the Church: the preaching of the Gospel in a language of contemporary man. "This accommodated preaching of the revealed Word ought to remain the law of all evangelization" (Vatican II, The Church Today, n. 44). It was this profound theology which made the Congress a success.

It is worth mentioning that the Canadian bishops, who had sponsored the Congress, were present in great numbers. They were present as participants, as friends. Many U.S. visitors, judging from positions where insight is available to them, were amazed at the ecclesiastical situation in Toronto and Canada where bishops have such human relations with their people. GREGORY BAUM

(Father Gregory Baum, O.S.A., is connected with the Center of Ecumenical Studies, St. Michael's College, Toronto.)

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LITURGICAL WEEK

THE BISHOPS' LOYAL OPPOSITION

Kansas City

"The most creative thing the Liturgical Conference could do is to go out of business." The thought may outrage thousands of Roman Catholics who have relied on the 27-year-old organization for direction in the search for renewal. But the dissolution of the Liturgical Conference, with its annual Liturgical Weeks, made sense to some others. There were those who contended that Vatican II was the consummation of liturgical reform; all that is left is a clean-up operation against the pockets of immobilist resistance. Most participants in the Liturgical Week were too painfully aware of the gap between conciliar state-

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ment and parochial reality to take this contention seriously. More importantly, dissolution of the Conference made sense to some young and lively souls who are disillusioned with the worth of liturgical reform.

In corridors, workshops and committees, the most heatedly debated position paper was not on the Liturgical Week program. Daniel Callahan's "Putting Liturgy in its Place" had appeared in the *National Catholic Reporter* immediately prior to the Week. While almost everybody at Kansas City appeared to have an argument to refute Callahan's thesis that the liturgy should be "devaluated," most agreed that he had posed a necessary challenge to the liturgical enterprise. Those who refused to admit this betrayed themselves by the vigor of their response to the challenge.

Callahan's article subtly shifted the theme of the Week. He gave concise articulation to a widespread uneasiness about the future and promise of liturgy in the Church's renewal. The theme of the 1967 Liturgical Week was "Experiments in Community." As a result of the debate focused on Callahan's argument, talk about *how* liturgy can better be made an experiment in community gave way to serious questioning about *whether* liturgy is necessary, or even possible, in the search for contemporary community. By the end of the Week, agitation for dissolving the Conference had subsided, not because any irrefutable answers were discovered, but maybe because the Liturgical Conference had again proven itself as an agency and forum for the serious questioning.

The determination to continue and strengthen the Conference reflects the intuition of its leaders that the most adventuresome era of liturgical renewal is just beginning. "The reforms to date," said newly elected Conference vice president Robert Rambusch, "have been mostly a long overdue housecleaning." Father Aidan Kavanagh of Notre Dame underscored the same point. After a demonstration "Mass of the Future," Kavanagh remarked, "That's a fair idea of what a good mass of the present should be like. Most of us haven't even started thinking about the mass of the future." That there will be a mass in (and hopefully of) the future seems certain. The Liturgical Conference is confident of its place in helping to shape that mass which, most still believe, will have a large role in reshaping the Church. Whether the Church of the future will, in turn, have a part in reshaping the world is the more final question, to be answered by history alone.

The 1967 Liturgical Week involved more than 10,000 people in general sessions, lectures, clinics, workshops and demonstrations touching upon almost every aspect of the Church's internal life and its relation to the modern world. For seasoned participants, attention focused on liturgy and urban revolution, symbols and analogical thought in culture, and intra-communion across the denominational lines within the Christian community.

Reactions varied to the opening session's much publicized "happening." It turned out to be a rather extended homily with a variety of audio-visual aids (including Beatles' records and pictures on ten projection screens). But even happenings that don't happen are instructive. This and other events in the program (notably, the attempt to demonstrate a home eucharist before a crowd of thousands in the Municipal Auditorium) gave evidence of the "courage to fail" that went into the planning of Liturgical Week. All in all, courage paid off handsomely in the unfolding of a provocative program.

Implications for the Future

What does the 1967 Liturgical Week imply for the future of the liturgical renewal and of the Liturgical Conference? First, I believe the Conference will continue to educate the church officialdom by offering respectful and pointed provocation. Second, the Conference will more accurately reflect the ecumenical character of liturgical renewal. Third, the liturgical renewal will take an increasingly hard-nosed stance toward the goals of Christian community.

The Conference's role of provocation cannot be taken for granted. It was obvious, from some of the bishops attending the Week, that members of the American hierarchy would like to see the Liturgical Conference more safely domesticated. The idea is that the Conference should become the hierarchy's instrument for mass education and implementation of existing reforms. It was equally obvious at Kansas City that participants in the Conference rejected this role. They were determined not to abdicate their prophetic mission for the sake of ecclesiastical favor. This is not the time, the majority said, to retrench and consolidate gains. This is the time to press the advantage given by Vatican II: "The Liturgical Conference," declared one of its leaders, "must be the bishops' loyal opposition." And loyal opposition was expressed, for instance, to the American hierarchy's failure even to introduce the new English translation of the canon until permission is received from Rome.

The problem is not that liturgically concerned priests are waiting breathlessly for permission. The problem, in this and other areas of change, is that experimentation is going ahead without any reference to the bishops. This is a matter of concern to liturgical leaders in the Conference who are not primarily worried about episcopal authority as such. They are worried that experimentation is being forced into an "underground church" where it is not available for critical examination and is removed from interaction with other experimental efforts. Loud applause greeted the homily at the closing mass of the Week in which Father John Corrigan of Washington, D.C., called on the bishops to lead the revolution that is in fact underway. Others suggested this was expecting a bit much, but that at least the bishops could get out of the way and let the experimentation come out into the open.

Liturgical renewal is an ecumenical enterprise. The

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Liturgical Week reflected this ecumenical fact by including an Ecumenical Conference on Christian Worship. This conference, plus sessions on ecumenism during the week, will be continued and, hopefully, expanded. Another ecumenical sign is that, for the first time, a non-Roman Catholic was elected to the Conference's Board of Directors.

Particularly hopeful is the Conference's recommendation that there be common eucharistic celebrations and intra-communion among "all who are united by baptism and by faith in Jesus the Christ as Lord and Savior" during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 1968. The recommendation was conditioned by a request that the authorities of the several churches should sanction such an expression of existing unity. As with liturgical experimentation, the point of the Conference's efforts is not so much to get permission to do something as it is to "regularize" what is already being done. Participants in the ecumenism workshop had no difficulty with the argument presented by Lutheran theologian Philip Hefner and Father Thomas Ambrogi of Woodstock, demonstrating that there are no theological or other persuasive hindrances to intra-communion.

Finally, the liturgical renewal will, I believe, take a more hard-nosed stance toward the goals of Christian community. "Experiments in Community" was a theme broad enough to attract people who were looking for an escape from the secular city in the village of "togetherness," and also those in search of a cultic expression for the politics of the future. One of the most discussed papers of the Liturgical Week was read by Father Raymond Potvin, sociologist at Catholic University. He insisted that the liturgical community could not, and should not try to, meet all of the individual's needs for interpersonal relations. Much of the desire to experiment with liturgical forms that provide "warmth," "closeness," "intimacy," etc., is misdirected, Potvin said. The liturgical gathering is not primarily to create an "affective community" but to support and articulate common purposes, commitments and self-understandings of people who group themselves as Christians. Of course Potvin's implication that some of what is considered avant-garde experimentation is really a cultic nostalgia for the womb met with considerable resistance. But there was general agreement that this is the kind of question the liturgical movement must confront honestly if it is to have a continuing claim on the attention of mature Christians.

Perhaps Liturgical Week 1967 marked the beginning of several endings: the end of an exclusively Roman Catholic enterprise of liturgical renewal; the end of infatuation with official approval; the end of the romanticism of liturgical togetherness. The future is less clear. But it seems likely that the Liturgical Conference is in a stronger position to evoke that future, and to work for a liturgy that can celebrate it. RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

(Richard John Neuhaus is senior pastor of the Church of St. John the Evangelist and editor of the Lutheran quarterly, Una Sancta.*)*

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

FROM SAIGON TO DETROIT

A Bad Summer's Notes: The election in Vietnam has accomplished its purpose—which was to legitimize American policy. The legitimization of a Thieu-Ky government was the means to this end. The military leadership now can claim a popular mandate. We, in turn, can argue to ourselves that with an elected government in Saigon this Vietnamese ordeal of ours may yet have a good outcome.

But this exercise in democracy, so anxiously promoted by the American Embassy, may in fact have been the penultimate blow to Saigon governmental authority. We see the election as a necessarily flawed but genuine attempt to consult the will of the Vietnamese people. How did the Vietnamese see it? No American is very likely to know; few Americans can claim an intellectual, to say nothing of an emotional, grasp of Vietnamese political assumptions and perceptions. What I am about to suggest is nothing more than an opinion insecurely based on arguments about the character of politics and society elsewhere in that part of Asia which has roots in Chinese civilization. But it may be that in Vietnam political legitimacy, the acknowledged right of rulers to rule, is understood as intimately connected with the rulers' demonstration that they are able to rule—able to impose order and suppress challenges.

If this is true, the military junta's anxiety not merely to win the election but to humiliate its opponents becomes intelligible. By the very holding of an election, a formal competition on the issue of who is to be allowed to rule in the future, they placed themselves on a level with their opponents. To Vietnamese this may have seemed an admission of government incompetence, and even of powerlessness—the rulers implicitly conceded that they were no better than a crowd of quarrelsome critics and rivals. Thus the military men saw it as indispensable to demonstrate that the election was *not* serious —that it was a charade performed to satisfy foreign opinion. The American government at the same time used every pressure at its command to demonstrate that the election *was* serious. Both were convinced that theirs was the only way to strengthen the political structure of

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the country. In the end the United States won. The election seemed serious. The Thieu-Ky ticket won—by a humiliatingly low percentage. Such a victory may have been the worst of outcomes.

The election resulted from an American effort to come to terms with the moral issues of the war. Washington wants to believe that it defends the Vietnamese popular will. Critics of the war argue often enough that the American intervention is immoral because it balks the will of the Vietnamese majority.

Yet surely this war is between two Vietnamese minorities—or between one competent minority and several incompetent ones. The revolutionary minority has given ample evidence of a ruthlessness which concedes nothing to the practices of the national army or the national administration. The thing that must be said about the NLF is that it has demonstrated that it is the only sizable, coherent, serious national political force visible in the country. Vietnamese society, despite the opportunity, has persistently failed to supply a political or military alternative to this minority's victory. Only we Americans stand between South Vietnam and its zealot fate.

The moral issue then seems to me simply one of a proportionate means to a realizable end. Can we Americans save Vietnam from itself? Can the American intervention produce a result significantly better than the result of settlement and withdrawal? Can it do so at a morally intelligible cost—one that does not discredit the outcome? The answers, in my opinion, are that we cannot. I do not thereby think that Vietnam will not suffer —only that it may suffer less than by our persistence in our present course.

It is now conventional to say that the war is at a military stalemate. The Administration officially denies that this is so. Yet its escalation of the bombing of North Vietnam virtually concedes stalemate on the ground. Some hawks want more bombing to achieve the victory thus far denied us. Some believe that stalemate will eventually force the Viet Cong to compromise, if not to disintegrate. Some want a barrier at the 17th parallel to permit defeat of an isolated Viet Cong. Some want a million American troops and predict a ten-year war. But few hawks—or doves, for that matter—can conceive of an American military defeat.

Yet in an important respect, perhaps the most important, the defeat has already occurred. An American army of a half-million men, with enormous tactical air support and the assistance of the Strategic Air Command and the Pacific Fleet, is waging this war against a revolutionary minority in an allied country—and against North Vietnam. And as Shirley Temple Black has described it, "the largest, strongest military power in the world" has failed to defeat "one of the smallest and weakest countries in the world."

The principal argument made that we are winning is by body-count—attrition, a notoriously unreliable standard, and in a war alleged to be against Asian Communism a standard whose implications stagger the imagination. By other military standards—who controls the ground, who maintains the initiative in giving battle and breaking it off—the enemy has as reasonable a claim to victory as we. Tactically we may not be defeated in Vietnam; but strategically, by virtue of the forces we have had to commit and their dramatic inability to force a decision, we have suffered a serious defeat—one which may prove profoundly destabilizing for the future of international relations.

Exporting counterrevolution, we have imported revolution. That Black Power enthusiasts this summer should have identified their cause with that of the Viet Cong is comprehensible. That liberal political officials should have been willing to accept and promulgate this definition of the American racial crisis provides the unexpected shock. The descriptions of the Newark and Detroit riots as "rebellions" and "insurrections" came from within the state and national governments. This involuntary choice of language tells more about the condition of America today than any riot. National Guardsmen now are told that riot control is "counterinsurgency warfare," and some commanders describe how heavy weapons can be brought to bear in our cities. Stokely Carmichael is quoted as saying that in Newark "we applied the war tactics of the guerrillas." American Negroes and whites alike are being told by the most responsible and the least responsible elements in American life to look at the domestic crisis in categories relevant to Vietnam. Writers in the *New York Review* advise that moderation is dead, the responsibility of the intellectual to act, not analyze; the duty of revolutionaries to make revolution.

What revolution? The word means to seize power—as the Viet Cong understands. In this country racial revolution would be repressed. That is the fact of the matter.

Black Power advocates are not revolutionaries, they are anarchists. This is very different, intelligible, implying an achievable program. The program is one of despair; revolution is an act of hope. When Rap Brown says that "if America don't come around, we're going to burn America down," this is a reasonable threat—if Brown means it, or if Negroes will act on his words—but it ends with America burned down.

This is a program for death, not life. Asian revolution, on the other hand, whatever its inner impulses, is not consciously directed to its own destruction. The devastating difference between America and Asia is as evident in "revolution" as in counterrevolution.

Exporting war to a society we do not understand, we import its categories of struggle with equal incomprehension, blinded by that violence which is, as Brown devastatingly and accurately puts it, "as American as cherry pie."

WILLIAM PFAFF

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"A tragic gap has opened between reality in Vietnam and what the American people think is happening. That gap is being carefully widened by Administration half-truths and outright deceptions."

TREADMILL TO DISASTER

JAMES O'GARA

The war in Vietnam is a tragic and bloody mistake, in the course of which we are risking an even larger and bloodier war. We have become reckless in our use of power and indiscriminate in the goals we seek, so much so that the war cannot be justified morally or politically. If the traditional Christian norms of just means and right proportion mean anything, we should vigorously seek negotiations and get out of Vietnam as quickly as possible.

The United States, people say, is in South Vietnam to prevent one nation from being gobbled up by another; if we don't fight Communist aggression in Southeast Asia, we will have to resign ourselves to fighting it in Los Angeles; now is as good a time as any to show the Chinese that we won't let ourselves be pushed around. The only trouble with all of these popular "reasons," however, is that they have little or no relevance to the present situation in Vietnam.

Despite what the Administration tries to suggest, most of those fighting against us in South Vietnam are in fact people from South, not North, Vietnam. Indeed, until our bombing of North Vietnam caused Ho Chi Minh to commit more of his troops across the border, it is probable that we had more South Koreans (not South Vietnamese) fighting on our side than there were North Vietnamese on the other. China is undoubtedly sympathetic to North Vietnam, and we may yet provoke her into a more active role. At this point, however, there is nothing to indicate that China has ever sent any men to fight in Vietnam, and if our purpose is to show the Chinese that we will not be bluffed, killing Vietnamese is an odd way to go about it.

Vietnam is essentially a revolutionary civil war, reflecting a domestic situation that is beyond our power to resolve. Is it a matter of no concern to us that only intense diplomatic pressure has won us even nominal support from our usual allies? In the Asia we are supposed to be saving, only our client-states back us; no independent state is giving us even token support—not Japan, India, Pakistan, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia. We are on a unilateral course in Asia, beset by notions of American omniscience and American omnipotence. It isn't that our best friends won't tell us; it is that we won't listen. If we pursue total victory as we have been doing, we will leave behind us in Vietnam a wilderness of dead civilians and ravaged villages. After such destruction what nations will want our protection?

Where China is concerned, responsible observers have noted that the Chinese may not unreasonably fear that our bases in Vietnam and in Thailand constitute preparations for war with them. As our bombers strike closer and closer to the Chinese border, with an occasional accidental intrusion into Chinese air space, the dangers of a world war escalate. Is this a rational national policy? The Administration is convinced that it can guess exactly how far we can go without bringing the Chinese into the war, but I doubt that most Americans really want to play what Walter Lippmann called this "deadly guessing game."

The Guerrilla War

As for the civil war in Vietnam itself, the Viet Cong could be defeated in the guerrilla fighting there only if the South Vietnamese regime had the support of the population. It did not have that support in Diem's day, and it does not today. Premier Ky served in the French Air Force in Vietnam in the years between 1946 and 1954, fighting, in other words, on the side of the colonial-

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ists when France sought to reestablish her prewar empire. Nor is Premier Ky alone in this; out of the ten generals who participated in the coup which brought him to power, nine were born in North Vietnam, not South, and nine fought for the French against the nationalists, only a small minority of whom were Communists. A lack of popular enthusiasm for a government headed by such men is hardly surprising.

American reporters on the scene in Vietnam during the Diem regime knew how badly the war was going. They knew Diem did not have the backing of the populace, even though he announced in 1955 that he intended to "liberate" the North. Despite these facts, American officials in Vietnam continued to send home glowing reports, and the American reporters who disagreed were accused of lacking the proper team spirit. Great progress was being made, U.S. officials insisted; as Senator Mike Mansfield recently remarked, progress reports are strewn like burned-out tanks all along the road into deeper U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Why did the effort in Vietnam fail? President Kennedy said in 1963 that the war was essentially a Vietnamese war; it still is. We really cannot win the war for the Vietnamese, and any military effort in that unhappy country will remain bloody and useless without serious internal reform. 75% of the farms in the South are owned by absentee landlords. In the Mekong Delta, more than one-half of the peasants own no land whatsoever. Of those who do, most own a one-tenth of an acre rice paddy and have to rent another one-half acre in order to live—paying 30 to 50% of their crop to landlords with no security of tenure in return.

What are the chances for reform? A deliberately discriminatory election law kept not only members of the National Liberation Front but so-called neutralists and militant Buddhists from running for the present Constituent Assembly, which in turn determined who could run in the just-concluded election. As a result, the regime in power represents still another mandarin-type collaboration between officers and landlords. Typically, when a genuine measure of land reform was introduced, only 3 out of 117 members of the Constituent Assembly voted for it, as Senator Stephen M. Young of Ohio recently pointed out.

We badly need to know what the Vietnamese people want—not what the generals say they want. But Premier Ky said he would respond "militarily" if a civilian with whose policies he disagreed won the presidency. "If he is a Communist, or if he is a neutralist," Ky said, "I am going to fight him militarily. In any democratic country you have the right to disagree with the views of others."

How long are Americans going to die to support a regime that is obviously afraid of an honest election? Diem refused to hold the nation-wide elections in 1956 which had been promised by the Geneva agreement because he was afraid he would lose them; we supported him in this policy, as we have suported countless repressions of free speech and free political activity since then, even to the point of standing by while South Vietnamese troops tortured prisoners. Is there no limit at all to what we can stomach?

We now have in Vietnam 460,000 men—more troops than we had in Korea fifteen years ago. Over 12,000 American soldiers have been killed so far and 75,000 have been wounded. The cost of the war is running in the area of $25 billion annually—as much as we spent on foreign economic development in all the years from 1953 to 1965—and the trend is up, not down. Someone has even calculated that it is costing us in excess of $300,000 to kill or capture a single member of the Viet Cong, and the cost in damage to American reputation and leadership is incalculable.

As for civilian casualties in Vietnam, it seems impossible to get a completely accurate picture, as James Finn suggests elsewhere in this issue. We know they are high on both sides, and last Christmas twelve Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish clergymen told the President that "the heartless war in the South continues, with the United States and South Vietnam forces matching the terror and assassinations of the Viet Cong by killing somewhere from two to five civilians for every Viet Cong guerrilla or North Vietnam regular." Viet Cong terror is a horrible fact, but does anyone suggest that terror can be matched with terror, assassination on their side with wide-spread bombing and the use of napalm on ours? The principle of double effect may cover a multitude of things, but can it be used to justify killing the innocent on this scale? Is Hanoi to be turned into another Dresden? And if we escalate again, what will be our next target—the irrigation dikes, destruction of which would be tantamount to genocide?

The assumption behind escalation, of course, is that the other side will sit quietly while we act, thus giving us the margin of superiority. In fact, this improbable result has not happened, and as a consequence we have step by step increased our involvement and our commitment to the war. Each step was supposed to produce the magical result; each step in turn failed and was used to justify the next. What has happened, of course, is that the enemy kept pace with us every step of the way.

In January of 1965, for example, there were 100,000 Viet Cong forces. After active American entry that number rose to 135,000 by April and to 170,000 by August —most of them from South Vietnam, not North. This has been the pattern ever since. What will we think of escalation, though, if the U.S.S.R. supplies missiles to be used against Saigon every time we hit Hanoi? Or against our air bases in Thailand, for that matter? How will we react if Chinese planes start to attack our bombers in defense of North Vietnam? Escalation works both ways, and the next big jump may be a Communist move, perhaps a decision by North Vietnam to fully commit its

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500,000 regular army or by China to send "volunteers" from its 800 million population.

Vietnam represents what Arthur Schlesinger called a "triumph of the politics of inadvertence." We have got to where we are by a series of small steps, each of which looked reasonable at the time. Yet each step led only to the next and in the end we have been trapped in that nightmare of American strategists, a land war in Asia.

Bombing North Vietnam

Next to committing U.S. troops, our largest single step in escalation was the decision to bomb North Vietnam. We widened the war deliberately, and the suspicion is strong that we did so primarily to help the morale of the Ky regime. Roger Hilsman, for one, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs in the Kennedy Administration, has testified that before our bombing there was no evidence of substantial North Vietnamese infiltration to justify our action. Since that time, infiltration from the North has escalated and the bombing is now defended on the theory that it limits infiltration, punishes Hanoi and will help to end the war—always on the assumption, of course, that China will not intervene. But the war cannot be settled in North Vietnam, as Robert McNamara admits; even if we did as one U.S. general suggested and bombed North Vietnam back into the Stone Age, the war in South Vietnam would still continue. Guerrilla war in the South cannot be won by obliterating the North. As for China's intentions, we may yet find Chinese roulette even more dangerous than the Russian variety.

There should be no mistake about it: in the bombing of North Vietnam we are playing with fire, both literally and figuratively. Even now, North Vietnam regulars amount to only a small fraction of the enemy forces. To pretend that the war simply involves aggression by North Vietnam, as Secretary Rusk insists, is to distort the issues and deceive the American people. It will not deceive China. Mr. Rusk was Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs during the Korean War, and he assured us then that China would not intervene. Nonetheless, China did intervene, and it may intervene again.

In any case, the bombing of North Vietnam is doing nothing to speed the end of the war—quite the contrary. Even if beating North Vietnam were the answer, which it is not, bombing would not work. Korea demonstrated that underdeveloped nations have their own kind of immunity from bombing. Only 15% of the Gross National Product of North Vietnam comes from industry, and no nation in which this is so can be bombed into submission. On the contrary, all reports indicate that our bombing has merely stiffened the North Vietnamese will to resist. It has certainly stepped up the tempo of the war in the South, and the North Vietnamese troops that Hilsman said were not there before are now crossing the border in increasing numbers.

The United States already drops more explosives each month in Vietnam than we dropped in Europe and Africa per month during World War II, more in one year than we dropped in the entire Pacific during World War II. One estimate is that we have already dropped a ton of bombs for every Viet Cong soldier. Even in military terms, the cost of this effort is prohibitively high. We have already spent over $1 billion in planes lost, and we have spent another billion in bombs and rockets. More than six hundred American pilots have been lost, most to the anti-aircraft fire heavily concentrated around the few industrial targets. The Hanoi-Haiphong area, for example, is said to be ringed by 4,000 guns.

All this has been done under the illusion that the war could be shortened by all-out bombing. This has proved to be just that, an illusion. U Thant and other responsible observers insist that an end to our bombing of the North is the inescapable first step to negotiations; we should take that step. I grant that stopping the bombing is a calculated risk and one on which the prospects are not as good today as they were a few months ago, but it is a risk we must take; if we do not, we are risking World War III and a casualty list in the millions.

Negotiations

Total military victory in Vietnam is unattainable and is in any case politically pointless. The alternative is negotiation, yet there are few subjects in connection with the war on which the American people are worse informed. Ask the average American and he will assure you that the United States is ready and eager to negotiate on the war, anytime and anywhere. In point of fact, however, the Administration has hedged all its offers to negotiate and has never made the Viet Cong a serious offer it could possibly accept, as Michael Novak details in his article.

A tragic gap has opened between reality in Vietnam and what the American people think is happening. That gap between the truth and what the American people believe to be the truth is being carefully widened by Administration half-truths and outright deceptions, deceptions that may in fact be self-deceptions. On the face of it, nothing could seem more reasonable than Mr. Johnson's customary call for negotiations, yet even in the very beginning we barred the National Liberation Front from full participation in the negotiations, thus setting conditions while protesting exactly the opposite. The same pattern has prevailed ever since, with first one condition and then another keeping us from the bargaining table.

I do not doubt that the President and those around him want the war over as much as I do; I fear, however, that they want it over only on their terms. Thus Mr. Johnson has assured the world that we would stop the bombing if we had some assurance of de-escalation—"just almost any step," the President said. But in a letter to Ho Chi Minh on February 2, Mr. Johnson said he would stop

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bombing "as soon as I am assured that infiltration into South Vietnam by land and by sea has been stopped." This would mean that Ho could not supply his forces; we could, of course, continue to supply ours. Why should the North Vietnamese leader be interested in such an offer? Significantly, the letter was released by the North Vietnamese, not by the United States, presumably because putting on the record how we had stiffened our conditions was an embarrassment to the Johnson Administration. Even so, the American people apparently did not grasp the significance of the letter, and the press treated the matter as if the North Vietnamese had rebuffed still another generous U.S. offer.

Self-Deception

In these matters it is painfully easy for all of us, from President Johnson down, to deceive ourselves. The enemy supplied their troops during the recent truce, and we did the same with ours. However, U.S. spokesmen charged the Viet Cong with breaking the truce, explaining to those who found it hard to understand that "the difference is a difference of intent. . . ." The enemy, it seems, intends aggression; we do not, so our hands are clean. In the same way we were, by our story, attacked in cold blood in the Gulf of Tonkin; the fact that our forces were standing by to support a South Vietnamese raid on the North Vietnamese coast is irrelevant. What can a rational man say of such reasoning?

Am I charging that President Johnson loves war and that Dean Rusk is Dr. Strangelove? Not at all—although it may be that some in the Administration believe the time to "face up" to China is now. But what I am saying is that a study of the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the Administration decided months ago that it wanted to negotiate—but not yet, and only on its own terms. Washington officials seem to have become convinced that any settlement negotiated now would be unsatisfactory; they want more victories so the U.S. will be in a dominating position when the time comes for bargaining.

A case could be made for such a position, of course, although I would think it a mistaken case; obviously if both sides take such a view, negotiations will never take place. But the point is that such a case is not being made. Barry Goldwater made it in 1964, and he was roundly defeated at the polls. Top officials of the Johnson Administration now seem to have bought the Goldwater thesis, but while they use big bombs in Vietnam, they continue to talk softly to the American people. This is political manipulation at its most cynical.

In short, I charge that Administration policy on Vietnam is misguided, often cynical and by and large unsuccessful. All we have achieved by escalation is a bloodier stalemate on a still higher plateau. If we continue to follow our present course, there is no end to the war in sight, even if we commit the million soldiers that Hanson Baldwin has always said would be necessary. In addition, the world is in deadly peril of World War III, for the Chinese too may think appeasement is risky, and this threat grows with the passing of every day.

The danger is, of course, that it gets harder and harder for each side to compromise; as commitments enlarge, the national sacrifice involved becomes so great that it can only be justified retroactively by total victory. Already one out of every four Americans queried in the Gallup poll favors the use of atomic weapons to gain military victory in Vietnam. How many will there be tomorrow, as our casualties mount? How many Christian voices are being raised on behalf of a proper proportion between what we are seeking and the means we are using to achieve it? It is time, and more than time, to call a halt, to encourage negotiation in Vietnam by the Vietnamese themselves; time to end brutality and slaughter on both sides; time for us to cease escalation and drastically change our direction.

There is no chance of winning everything we want at the bargaining table, and there is no doubt that the National Liberation Front will have to be assured of a place in the life of the country. Negotiation, like a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam, represents a real risk. Nonetheless, this risk too we must take. The real choice we face in Vietnam is not between good and evil, but between two evils. Surely it is not unreasonable to suggest that we choose the lesser evil of negotiation and less-than-perfect settlement before all of Vietnam is turned into a vast wasteland.

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LEWIS TURCO

BURNING THE NEWS

The fire is eating
the paper. The child who drowned
is burned. Asia is in flames.
As he signs his great
bill, a minister of state chars

at the edges and curls
into smoke. The page rises,
glowing, over our neighbor's
roof. In the kitchens
clocks turn, pages turn like grey wings,

slowly, over armchairs.
Another child drowns, a bill
is signed, and the pen blackens.
The smoke of Asia
drifts among the neighbors like mist.

It is a good day for burning.
The fire is eating the news.

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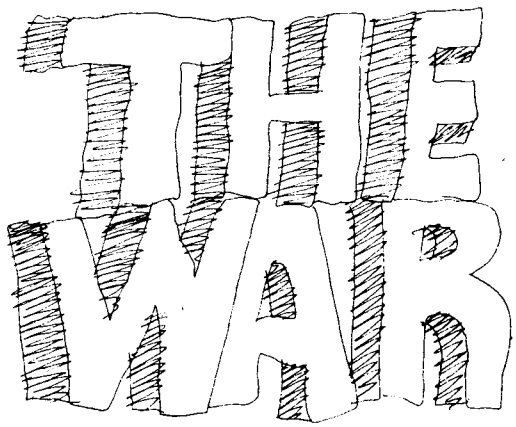
"The number of civilian casualties remains a tortured question. Senator Edward Kennedy predicted that there would be 100,000 such casualties in 1967."



THE HUMAN COST

JAMES FINN

What have the last 10 to 12 years done to Vietnam and its people? I presume that the question cannot be answered both accurately and completely. First, the available statistics are overlapping and contradictory; second, for some quantifiable aspects of Vietnamese life no statistics are available; and third, some important aspects of Vietnamese life are simply not quantifiable.

But the answer that one can give to the question, as partial and incomplete as it must be, is nevertheless impressive—and depressing.

The Vietnamese have been subjected to war for decades, but 1954, the year in which the country was divided into North and South Vietnam according to the Geneva agreements, is a convenient point to start an assessment. In the years 1954-56 the Communist North instituted a harsh Land Reform Campaign during which, it has been estimated, 100,000 people were killed. (As George Carver pointed out in *Foreign Affairs* for April, 1966, this is equivalent to 1,000,000 American citizens.) There are no reliable figures for the number of people in South Vietnam who lost their lives under the dictatorial regime of President Diem.

When the all-Vietnamese election, which the Geneva Agreements scheduled for 1956, failed to take place, a program of violence, aimed at the Diem regime, was initiated in the South. It reached its peak in the years 1962-63, when approximately 20,000 were kidnapped or assassinated. (General Westmoreland has said that during the last nine years the number of kidnappings and assassinations in South Vietnam total 53,000, and most of these were local leaders.) But with the beginning of 1963, the conflict reached a new stage and casualties among armed forces increased rapidly. According to Douglas Pike, the total death rate in Vietnam from 1960 to 1966 "was an estimated 280,000 or 575 per week." To translate these figures again, this would be the rough equivalent of 3,200 people killed weekly in this country.

The tempo of the fighting has, of course, been stepped up gradually and steadily in the last two years, and with the bombing of the North it has become increasingly difficult for anyone to get dependable figures for the total number of Vietnamese casualties. But it is beyond question that the casualty rate has soared. For example, the U.S. Department of Defense says that the U.S. forces killed between Jan. 1, 1961, and July 1, 1967, were 11,534. Of these, almost 5,000 were killed this year, The over-all ratio of South Vietnamese casualties to U.S. casualties is roughly four to one. Another indication of the extensive death toll is that the number of enemy killed during the week of June 24-July 1 is given as 1,331.

The number of civilian casualties remains a tortured question. Senator Edward Kennedy predicted that there would be 100,000 civilian casualties in 1967 and drew no official criticism. The three-man medical team that went to South Vietnam earlier this year for the Committee of Responsibility reported that on the basis of the casualties admitted to the hospitals of the South Vietnamese Ministry of Health during the first three months of 1967 the hospitals would receive 50,000 during the year, 10,000 of which would be children. It has been estimated, however, that only one of every three casualties reaches a hospital. David McLanahan, a former intern in a Danang hospital, wrote in the March 25 *Saturday Review* that "in 1965, the total amount spent by all sources on medical care of Vietnamese civilians was $8,500,000, and it is estimated that $50,000,000 will be spent in 1967."

It is constantly acknowledged that the military conflict in Vietnam is only one aspect of the struggle. There must also be concern for political and social development. This means constant attacks on the problems of inflation and corruption which have accompanied, almost inevitably, the introduction of U.S. men, money and material into

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Vietnam. The reports of how well these social evils are contained fluctuate from one commentator to another, and one must be content to say that they remain extensive.

More important as a gauge to social development is the extensive effort of "pacification," or "rural construction," or—as it is currently called—"revolutionary development" (R.D.). In the June, 1967 issue of *Progressive,* Thomas Hagley offered some statistics that indicate the scope of the problem. The R.D. program is intended to enhance the security and improve the living conditions of the people in the hamlets of South Vietnam. Of the 11,000 hamlets, it is estimated that 4,500 support the Saigon government, 3,500 are controlled by the Viet Cong, and 3,000 are contested. To pacify five hamlets near Saigon required "more than 1,000 American and Vietnamese troops, more than 700 ambush patrols, more than 500 search-and-clear operations by 30-man teams, and more than 10,000 rounds of supporting artillery fire as well as jet fighter support" and supporting agencies. At such a rate, Hagley concludes, it could take more than 20 years to pacify all of South Vietnam. His view would gain support from Mary McCarthy who, reporting extensively on her recent trip to Vietnam, ladled scorn on the R.D. program.

Again there are counter-judgments, and not always from U.S. officials. For instance Alastair Hetherington, editor of the *Manchester Guardian* (which is not generally regarded as either conservative or pro-American) rejected a number of Miss McCarthy's statements as fanciful and believes that the R.D. teams are making progress. And according to the New York *Times* of July 10, even the critics of Robert W. Komer, our new Deputy Ambassador, concede that he is improving the organization and planning of the pacification program. But that still leaves open the question of what a successful pacification program does to the social fabric of Vietnamese life.

Against the estimates of the damage now being inflicted upon the Vietnamese—severe even in the most conservative estimates—must be placed estimates of the cost of a U.S. "victory," or withdrawal or another alternative. Mr. Hetherington, for example, writes: "Given the situation as it is today, will the Vietnamese attain peace more quickly if the Americans abandon Vietnam leaving it to chaos and further civil war, or if they stay until their task is done? Answers will differ. Mine is that the Americans ought to stay."

Others, even while they acknowledge that an American withdrawal would expose many South Vietnamese to the mercies of a harsh enemy, think the cost to the Vietnamese would be less than that of continued conflict. But we ascend here from uncertain estimates to rife speculation where objectivity is at a discount, and it is well to return to relative certitudes. The most obvious is that if the war continues to develop according to the pattern now firmly established, the cost to the Vietnamese, both North and South, will mount. Some of the damage could be repaired by massive infusions of postwar aid. What cannot be restored are the lives of the people. When we consider that France and England suffered for generations from the losses incurred in World War I, another war of attrition, we can form some idea of what the future holds for the Vietnamese.

"In sum . . . the domino theory exaggerates both the scope of the Communist threat and its crucial significance for the 'free' world."

POLICIES OF DELUSION

JOHN K. MORIARTY

"The argument is about what the argument is about," was E. E. Schattschneider's comment on the American political process. Whoever defines what the argument is about has defined the problem and gone a long distance toward defining the answer. The debate over U.S. policy in Vietnam arises from the fact that a significant portion of the American populace will not accept the Administration's word for what the argument is about.

The argument over what the argument is about goes

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on, in one form or another, not only among the general public and in Congress but in the United States Executive Branch—including the State Department, the Department of Defense and the CIA. This lack of unanimity in the U.S. government pertains to (1) the threat in Vietnam, (2) the implications of the threat, and (3) what the U.S. should do about the threat. It accounts for most of the ambiguity in present U.S. policy. And there is ambiguity—an ambiguity that has many aspects but which generally resolves itself into two broad, and differing, justifications for our actions in Vietnam: (1) we are in South Vietnam at the request of an independent government, to assist in its defense against external aggression; (2) we are there to defeat, on this crucial battleground, the worldwide campaign of Communist aggression, because if the Communists win here they will probably also conquer Thailand, then the rest of Southeast Asia, and perhaps even the entire underdeveloped world. These two purposes of U.S. policy are not consistent.

The first objective—an independent South Vietnam free from foreign interference—requires that the U.S. itself not interfere unduly in this independent country, and implies that the U.S. would withdraw from South Vietnam if it were asked to do so by a representative South Vietnamese government—even if that government wished to compromise with the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese. But the second objective—stopping in this crucial spot the worldwide aggressive campaign of subversive Communism—would require that the Communists be defeated in South Vietnam no matter what the cost to them. It is in the confusion between these two objectives, and paricularly in the tendency to assume that the first is automatically included in the second, that there arises much of the wider confusion and controversy surrounding the U.S. presence in Vietnam.

The 'Specter' of China

A third objective for U.S. actions in Vietnam is sometimes cited by strategic "realists" in the Government. They declare that future Chinese expansionism (basically Chinese *national power* as opposed to *Communist ideology*) in the Far East must be contained by U.S. power, and that our stand in South Vietnam is necessary in order to prevent other neighboring countries—chiefly those in Southeast Asia, plus possibly the Philippines and Indonesia—from being brought into the Chinese sphere of influence, as presumably are the North Vietnamese. For the stricter advocates of this "containment" objective, then, Communism is not per se the threat, but is in fact merely a technique of Chinese imperialism. This third argument, however, is rarely heard in its unalloyed form and is not an important factor in the public debate. It will not be considered here in detail.

The fact that there are ambiguities in U.S. policy objectives in Vietnam does not connote U.S. insincerity, as is sometimes charged. A succession of governments in South Vietnam have made it clear that they do wish U.S. help against the Viet Cong, and certainly a considerable portion of the South Vietnamese population does not wish to live under a Communist government. At the time of the 1954 Geneva Accords, for example, when the population of all Vietnam was given freedom of choice, some 900,000 people moved from the North to the South. They had good reason to fear the Communists. During the period 1953-56, the so-called Land Rent Reduction Program, and its successor the Agrarian Reform Program, became in practice a vast bloodletting in North Vietnam. By the time the terror was finished, some 100,000 people had been executed. Whether or not such a program would ever be instituted in the South if the Viet Cong won is perhaps a moot question, but one can certainly understand the concern of many people there over being brought under a Communist government.

Whether South Vietnam is an independent country, separate from its "neighbor" to the North, is one of those muddy historical questions which are resolved not by documents and logic but by force and accident. Certainly there is no experience of a united, homogeneous Vietnam comprising both North and South—but neither is there a separate South Vietnamese nationality. The people both North and South are basically Vietnamese (who comprise some five-sixths of the total), with the remainder consisting of pockets of Chinese, Cambodians and, of course, the Montagnards spread over the central highlands and the western mountains. But the Vietnamese peoples' loyalties are primarily local, down to village level, and they have historically shown little concern for a national government, either North or South, so long as it would leave them alone and not make the taxes too high. And whether one can speak of the two portions of Vietnam as being more different from each other than, say, North and South Korea, or East and West Germany, or for that matter, the Northern and Southern United States at the time of the Civil War would seem to be open to argument.

Presently—and largely by virtue of U.S. military power—South Vietnam is a separate country. It also faces the very real threat of conquest by force, if the U.S. should withdraw its assistance; and the threat against South Vietnam is closely controlled by North Vietnam. While the National Liberation Front undoubtedly contained significant non-Communist elements in its early years, any picture of it today as a coalition of nationalistic Vietnamese among whom the Communists are merely one group is a total misconception. In its policies and its actions—in its very capability for effective continuation of the war—the NLF has shown itself to be basically a creature of Hanoi. On the other hand, the Viet Cong *have* been primarily *South* Vietnamese (with most of the leaders consisting of "regroupees" who went north in 1954 and were infiltrated back into the south several years later); even as late as 1963, it was difficult to find North Vietnamese

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among them, though they were sought for propaganda purposes.

The Viet Cong use of selectively applied terror as a deliberate technique of takeover is also real. Chiefly the victims of the terror are the very good or the very bad. An able, dedicated official or school teacher working in the villages for the government is a danger to the revolution, and may thus become the target of an assassination team who will leave his head on a pole as a grim warning. The victim may also be selected from among government spies, however, or officials or policemen who are feared and hated by the villagers, and the Viet Cong may then be viewed as protectors and liberators.

For winning the support of the people—either through positive motivation or through fear—is the essence of revolutionary warfare. And people's support is not won through indiscriminate killing and terror. On its positive side, the Viet Cong philosophy is to teach their members to help the people, to pay for anything taken, not to rape or mistreat the women, and generally both to be and to appear as the friend of the people. The philosophy is certainly sound—and particularly effective, if, as is frequently the case, the government soldiers feel free to beat up or steal from anyone they please, and the South Vietnamese officers show virtually no feeling for the people. The Viet Cong often do not live up to their own standards, and the South Vietnamese government is striving, with American help, to instill a different approach into its civilian officials and military forces—but it is not clear at all that the government is winning this battle.

Taken all together, however, the U.S. case for its presence in South Vietnam is not a weak one. There is definitely a Communist threat; many people in the South have good reason to hate and fear it; the threat is strongly backed and basically controlled from Hanoi; and it has the support of the Communist world, especially China and the Soviet Union. There can be little question that many peoples and governments in Asia are watching with great concern the progress of the war in Vietnam. A U.S. military defeat or a withdrawal by the U.S. that would simply leave the people of the South to their own fate would have a major impact on the attitudes of many Asians regarding the probable future prospects of Communism. The United States bears a major responsibility for the future peace and order of this part of the world, and it can no more absolve itself of this responsibility than a powerful, wealthy individual in an American city can close his eyes in the belief that what goes on around him is no concern of his.

So if one admits that the United States is not in Vietnam because of some unacknowledged imperialistic ambitions, what fault can be found with what it is doing? I find three: (1) we have exaggerated the threat in Vietnam, and therefore the importance of defeating that threat; (2) because we have misunderstood the nature of the threat, we are using the wrong methods in meeting it; (3) we have misjudged the impact of our actions both on the Communist countries and on the so-called Free World.

The dimension of the threat has been exaggerated through the substitution of a metaphor for analysis—the "domino theory"—with its implications that somehow the Chinese Communists are directing the Communist effort in Vietnam, and that they can similarly control "proxy" revolutions in other countries. But Peking is not controlling the Communist effort in South Vietnam. Hanoi

is. And there is no reason to believe that the North Vietnamese wish slavishly to follow Chinese orders in the future.

Moreover, it is not at all apparent, even if a Communist government should come to power in South Vietnam, and even if it *were* dominated by China, why Thailand would fall next, then Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Burma, India and so on through Asia, Africa and Latin America. Does anyone really believe that the Cubans, or the Egyptians, or the Congolese, or the Burmese, or the Indians, or any of the other hundreds of peoples in the Third World would subordinate for very long their own national interests to those of Peking? The Sino-Soviet Bloc did not hold together; even the Soviet Bloc in Eastern Europe could not be tightly controlled indefinitely from Moscow. China today is clearly having trouble even controlling *itself*. There is certainly nothing in political logic, in history, or in common sense to justify the belief that there could exist for even a few minutes a monolithic Communist bloc in the underdeveloped world controlled out of Peking.

Even the more limited view of the domino theory—that the only countries really in danger are those in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia and the Philippines—is far from obvious. Undoubtedly the Chinese would like to extend their influence over their neighbors. But China today is not a Great Power. Its huge army of over 2-million men is seriously lacking in modern military equipment, its navy and air force are not significant, its nuclear delivery capability cannot approach that of a Great Power for the indefinite future, and its vast and growing population can be regarded as an economic and political liability as much as a power asset. In fact, in terms of Gross National Product, Japan is a more powerful nation

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than China—and in the foreseeable future Japan might perhaps become a greater military power.

The claim is that the Chinese will conquer their neighbors by subversion and blackmail, rather than by outright military force. The Chinese record in this respect has been outstandingly poor so far, however—and those commentators who glibly find the Chinese failures in Africa and Indonesia a direct result of the U.S. military effort in Vietnam owe their audiences some proof more substantial than a mere wish that it be so. In every case, internal issues appear to have predominated in the turbulent contests for power in the underdeveloped countries —which is precisely what historical experience should lead us to expect.

The Communists (Chinese, Russian or Cuban) do not have a magic formula for taking over under-developed countries. The product they have to offer has not proved that attractive. In the years immediately after World War II they attempted takeovers in Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indochina. In all of these except the last the question of national independence was quickly eliminated, and the Communists were eventually defeated. In Indochina, where the French attempted to reimpose their control, very possibly for psychological reasons as much as anything, the war has continued for over 20 years and reached even greater heights with the American involvement.

If the domino theory is interpreted to mean (the theory's adherents are rarely precise on just what it does mean) merely that regimes hostile to the U.S. will irreversibly come to power throughout the underdeveloped world, though not necessarily under Chinese or Russian domination, is there any reason to accept this as a mortal threat to U.S. security? What is their real power, if they are not under central control? And why should nonaligned, or left-leaning, regimes remain permanently hostile to the U.S.? The U.S. too can make powerful political and economic appeals to such countries, if it does not tie itself too closely to reactionary groups within them.

The domino theory posits not only that other countries must inevitably fall to the Communists if South Vietnam falls, but implies conversely that these countries will remain "free" if South Vietnam does not fall. From the standpoint of the peoples involved, however, the choice is not between freedom and slavery but usually between one kind of authoritarian government and another, one kind of poverty and another, one kind of injustice and another. A Communist victory or defeat in South Vietnam may influence, but it will not determine, the course of these separate struggles against authoritarianism, poverty and injustice; they will continue in any event.

In sum, while there is definitely a Communist threat in South Vietnam, the domino theory exaggerates both the scope of the threat and its crucial significance for the "free" world.

What of U.S. methods in Vietnam—the second item with which I have found fault? We began military involvement with Vietnam in 1950, channeling assistance through the French. Then, after the French defeat in 1954, we gave assistance directly to the South Vietnamese government, building up a conventional army, along American lines and using American weapons, with the initial purpose of defending against an attack across the border such as had taken place in Korea. In the process, we made the army the dominant political institution in South Vietnam, as we did in several other underdeveloped countries. The dictator Diem was able to hold power only by gaining control of the army; when the army decided to depose him he was finished. And the elections held earlier this month in South Vietnam gave the country military officers who will rule as president and vice-president by virtue of the support of the armed forces.

In the last few years, the thesis has increasingly found favor in official U.S. policy that the army in underdeveloped countries is the major force for stability, the guardian of social progress, the ultimate repository of political sanity. (It is indeed ironic that this principle should be espoused in the United States, a nation whose oldest and most fundamental political traditions involved a distrust, fear and even hatred of arbitrary military power.) In any event, the officer class in most underdeveloped countries is not the "nation's obedient handyman" of American nineteenth century history, but a powerful social group with its own political and economic interests. Thus, in South Vietnam, though the U.S. has had one policy of consistently urging reforms, its military policy has retained power in the class which supported the French against the Viet Minh and which has little will for the reforms required.

The increasing U.S. commitment of its own forces has compounded the mistake of dependence on the South Vietnamese military. As the U.S. military strength increased, so did the North Vietnamese efforts and resolve to throw out the "American invaders." And as the U.S. strength has increased, so has the disruption of the South Vietnamese social and economic life, and so has the dependence of the South Vietnamese Government on the United States for measures that it should take for itself.

Perhaps most important, it is not apparent that U.S. military forces can accomplish the task now set out for them—that of defeating the Communist threat militarily, so that indigenous South Vietnamese elements can then pacify the country and proceed with "nation building." In the first place, while U.S. forces clearly are not being defeated, it is not obvious that they are winning the war even against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese main force units. The tactical initiative in actually joining combat still lies with the enemy, in spite of U.S. superior firepower and mobility, and the North Vietnamese have committed only a portion of their army. Secondly, even if the U.S. could defeat these main forces, there still would remain the guerrilla threat, and there is little evidence that

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much progress is being made in this sphere. Thirdly, even if the main force and guerrilla threat could be defeated, there is no cause to believe that South Vietnam yet has a government around which the people will rally. If there is not such a government, then the Communist drive for social and economic reform, for Vietnamese unification, for throwing out the "American invaders," and for bringing down the "puppet government" will continue to produce revolutionists for the foreseeable future. In sum, it is not apparent that we "can get there from here" by application of ever-growing U.S. military force in the South.

I further disagree with our methods in regard to the bombing of the North. We are not accomplishing the major objectives we set for ourselves in the bombing and it does not appear likely that we will do so. The U.S. objectives for the bombing have consistently been these three: (1) by interdiction of the infiltration routes to significantly reduce North Vietnam's ability to supply and maintain the war in the South, (2) through progressive destruction of selected targets in the North to make it increasingly difficult and costly for North Vietnam to support the war in the South, and thus force them to the conference table—presumably on our terms, and (3) to raise the morale of the South Vietnamese leadership, who about the time the bombing began were in rather desperate straits. The last of these, at least, has been accomplished.

The bombing has also seriously hurt the North Vietnamese transportation and communications network. It has destroyed bridges, fords, roads, trucks, locomotives, railroad cars, choke-points in mountain passes. But there is little evidence that it has significantly reduced the Communist capability to supply the South. The infiltration continues; the war continues; and any diminution in activity in the South can probably be attributed more to the tactical situation than to logistical deprivation. By the use of masses of human labor and improvisation, the North Vietnamese have kept the supply routes open. They have rebuilt smaller bridges, and camouflaged them; repaired railroads; constructed new fords in place of bridges; improvised pontoon bridges which are hidden in the daytime and used at night; built complete new roads; made jungle tracks motorable; by-passed choke points. And the people and supplies continue to move South.

What is probably worse, the routes are more invulnerable now than they were when we began. The big bridges have not been rebuilt. But they have been replaced by the fords and pontoon bridges, and all are more difficult to locate. Where there used to be one main road, now there are several, or even a network. Thus the targets get harder to find and less remunerative all the time.

Lastly, it probably should have been apparent to us beforehand that we were going to have trouble effectively interdicting the routes to the point that we would have a critical effect on the war: (1) much of the men and material originates in the South, and therefore doesn't come over the routes; (2) there are alternative routes, such as water; (3), and most important, we failed at least once before in similar tactics, in the Korean War, where even in a larger operation in which more supplies were being consumed, the tonnage arriving at the front was never reduced below that estimated as necessary for the North Koreans to maintain effective operational capability.

Industrially Primitive

As for the second objective of making the infiltration so difficult and costly for the North Vietnamese that they will come to the conference table, there is still no indication they will come on our terms—if they come at all. Probably the critical factor here is that the supplies moving over the infiltration routes are largely not originating in North Vietnam anyway, so that all the steel mills, power plants and factories there could be destroyed, with little effect. The supplies are coming from China and the Soviet Union, and North Vietnam is in effect simply a logistic funnel through which the supplies are being passed. Also, since North Vietnam is an industrially primitive country, probably all its vulnerable assets can be destroyed without having a critical effect on the leaders' resolve—and the remainder of the Communist world will undoubtedly replace, after the war, whatever has been destroyed.

Such targets as supply depots, fuel depots and military barracks which have been destroyed have not been rebuilt. And when they were bombed, most probably contained little worthwhile anyway, because both personnel and supplies had been dispersed in small packets in the forests and villages, where the targets are more difficult to find, less vulnerable and less remunerative. The results, then, are minimal—but the costs are not.

By our increasing military pressure we have driven the Liberation Front closer to Hanoi, and Hanoi closer to Peking, when one of our major objectives should be to divide them—and there are reasons to think they could be divided.

We have compromised the loyalty and sympathy of many friends of the U.S. in many parts of the world.

We are making a wider war much more likely. It is not improbable at all that in the near future some spectacular defeat will be inflicted on U.S. forces, and then public pressure in the United States will rise almost irresistibly to do something drastic, such as invade North Vietnam. From there it is but a step to direct war with China. And any idea that the Soviet Union would be happy to have us destroy China for them is, I believe, wild. The Soviets have objected for years to the fact that the strongest military power in Western Europe is the U.S.; they cannot wish that same power to reach round the world, establish itself in China, and enclose them in the pincers

The U.S. commitment in Vietnam exceeds the importance of its objectives there—and also the clarity with which the nation sees those objectives. Instead of stead-

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ily escalating the war, while the objectives recede further into the distance, the U.S. should begin a program of gradual de-escalation to bring its commitments in Vietnam into balance with its stake there. One method of doing this would be as follows:

1. Stop the bombing of the North. It is not accomplishing objectives; it is dividing our friends from us; it is giving the United States an image of imperialism in Asia; and it bears within itself the very real dangers of a wider war, perhaps World War III.

2. Stop the bombing and shelling of the villages in the South. The bombing and shelling have been helpful militarily, it is true, and if we stop them the Viet Cong could use the villages as sanctuaries. On the other hand, by destruction of the villages we are disrupting the fabric of South Vietnamese society, we are doing nothing to defeat the more important guerrilla and non-military threat of the Viet Cong, and we are leaving a residue of hostility for the Americans and the South Vietnamese Government.

3. Stop the crop-spraying. This has also been helpful militarily, because it strikes at the greatest vulnerability of the Viet Cong, which is food. But it is subject to the same disadvantages mentioned above for the bombing and shelling of villages, and these outweigh any gain.

4. Simultaneously with the foregoing actions, reaffirm (a) that the United States is not going to abandon the South Vietnamese, (b) that U.S. objectives in South Vietnam are limited to defense against its takeover by force, and (c) that the U.S. intends to leave the country after the conclusion of hostilities, rather than stay and exploit it as the French did. Couple the above with a reaffirmation of U.S. willingness to draw up a timetable for withdrawal from South Vietnam, though dependent on the actual negotiations and on Viet Cong and North Vietnamese cooperation; also include a willingness to cease future U.S. military support to the South Vietnamese government, whoever comprises it.

5. Continue U.S. encouragement of the South Vietnamese government to get on with the so-called "other war" the land reform measures, administrative and political reforms, the attempts to make the government a friend rather than an enemy of the people, the measures to "civilianize" itself. An important aspect of this would be an extension of the present "Chieu Hoi," or amnesty program in which the members of the Liberation Front would be invited to participate on a no-reprisals basis in the formation and operation of the government. A further aspect could be a provision for UN-supervised elections, though such matters as this should await developments.

There are obvious dangers in the above proposals. The Communists might not accept them. Or they might accept, and stall negotiations interminably. Or they might say nothing, and redouble their efforts in the South. The U.S. could make clear, however, that it is not going to leave South Vietnam until a settlement is reached. In effect, then, the Communists would have a chance to negotiate the U.S. out of Vietnam. There have been indications that they would pay quite a price for this result.

Another danger, of course, would be that Marshal Ky and others in Saigon would feel betrayed by some of the actions suggested above. They might even attempt an outright coup or revolt. But the U.S. commitment is to South Vietnam, not to Marshal Ky, and there is no reason to allow a military junta to make U.S. foreign policy for it. If the military revolted against their U.S. protector, it is difficult to see how they could sustain themselves for long. The U.S. would have to wait, with "strategic patience," and try to help pick up the pieces.

It is possible, of course, that there would be no pieces to pick up. The program I have suggested above might result in a temporary military or coalition government in South Vietnam, followed by a Communist guerrilla takeover, or it might result in a government which made peace with North Vietnam and merged with it. Either of these results would be very unfavorable for U.S. policy —but they would be preferable to the disadvantages of the present course of action. On the other hand, neither of these results is inevitable, and the U.S. has many cards to play to help prevent them.

'Nation Building'

There are other implications of the U.S. intervention in Vietnam which require a broader look at U.S. political-military policy. One of these is the increasing importance of the U.S. military in the business of "stability operations" and "nation building." Herein lies one of the most portentous, and potentially dangerous, trends in U.S. relations with the underdeveloped world. For in the U.S. military a large number of conscientious, un-imperialistic, even idealistic men, particularly in the Army, see for themselves and for the United States a future which involves "winning" the battle of the Free World against Communism, on the battleground of the Third World. The means by which they propose to do this include an entire gamut of actions ranging from outright U.S. military intervention, through military advice and logistical support, to economic assistance and political education at the other end of the spectrum.

In devising this role for the Army in the great battle against Communism they draw partly on their military experience, partly on their history of governing such territories as Alaska and the Canal Zone, partly on their accomplishments in the economic rebuilding and "democratization" of Germany and Japan as an occupation army, and partly on the remarkable record of the Corps of Engineers in the U.S. in integrating itself usefully with the civilian fabric by building bridges, dams, jetties, monuments, etc. But what the U.S. Army can do in the American political context, there must be grave doubts that it can accomplish in the underdeveloped world. If the U.S. is going to engage in this task, then let it find another

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approach, and another instrument. The primary U.S. contribution to the underdeveloped world is surely its political philosophy of individual freedom and its sincere belief in human material progress, rather than techniques for holding back revolution—whether Communist-inspired or otherwise.

A second implication of the U.S. war in Vietnam is the necessity for arriving at some larger solution to the problem of conflicting power interests in the Far East. A major U.S. task should be the promotion of an Asian security conference, with the objective of underwriting a settlement in Vietnam, and of establishing the outlines of future relationships among the powers in the area. Some of the major U.S. aims in such a conference would be to: (a) encourage the assumption by indigenous countries—especially Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, India and Pakistan—of increasing responsibility for the future development, stability and security of the area; (b) reaffirm U.S.—and if possible, regional—support of countries which might be subjected to external aggression; (c) reaffirm U.S. willingness to participate in regional economic development proposals; (d) leave the door open for as much Chinese and even Soviet participation (however informal) as possible.

An important, though not the sole, purpose of the conference would be to make clear the terms on which Communist China can expect to live in peace with its neighbors in the Far East. For this reason it would be extremely important that the conference not take on simply an anti-Communist or anti-Chinese tone. Otherwise, most of the large and truly important Asian nations would not attend or subscribe to its results, the small allies of the U.S. would insure that the divisive issues which will determine the future peace of Asia were sharpened rather than moderated or negotiated, and the U.S. would undoubtedly be committed to decades of conflict and intervention on the Asian continent.

The preparation and conduct of U.S. foreign policy for and during such a conference would pose immense problems. A great nation does not alter even slightly the direction of a policy it has pursued for a decade and a half without major effects upon—even disruptions of—other nations' affairs. Responsibilities have been incurred by the U.S. which cannot simply be dismissed. National expectations have been encouraged and important political figures' personal careers have been committed. There are genuine fears in the Far East both of Communist subversion and Chinese power. And the Soviet Union will look suspiciously at any evidence of detente between the U.S. and China, even though it has certainly not wanted outright war between the two. But these problems are not insoluble. And to the extent that U.S. diplomacy and leadership can rise to them, the most powerful country in the world can throw its weight either in the direction of future world order or increasing world conflict. The task is a truly great one—suitable for a great nation.

"It seems quite plain the U.S. does not want to stop fighting and begin to talk, but wishes instead to gain military concessions before any cessation of the bombing."

ALL, ALL HONORABLE MEN

MICHAEL NOVAK

To speak of military victory in South Vietnam, Secretary McNamara has warned us, is to speak nonsense. There are no front lines. There is hardly any opposing army—the major part of the revolutionary forces is composed of civilian soldiers, whose numbers grow steadily with the years, and whose presence in the countryside is extremely difficult even to detect. There is pitifully little to bomb or to shell, except silent jungle. Either the war will slowly peter out over many long years, or it will have to end through negotiations. But what is there to negotiate?

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Perhaps even more interesting, who will be the negotiators? The flurry of diplomatic activity in the early part of 1967 revealed that the National Liberation Front in South Vietnam has significantly different ideas about the future than Hanoi. Meanwhile, the military regime in South Vietnam has a vested interest in continuing the war; Premier Ky, weeks before the September election, announced that if his people voted for a peace candidate or a neutralist he would feel obliged to seize command again by force. And what, exactly, are the aims of the United States concerning negotiations?

Theodore Draper has told the sorry story of the diplomacy of the Johnson administration during the first few months of 1967 in "How Not to Negotiate" in *The New York Review of Books* for May. A Stanford senior, James E. Marti, has prepared an unpublished study of 80 recorded exchanges between the United States and North Vietnam from Jan. 1 to Feb. 28, 1967. Forty of the 49 U.S. transactions, Mr. Marti finds, were nonconciliatory; of the conciliatory moves, eight were initiatives but only three were military. By contrast, the North Vietnamese made 19 conciliatory moves, 15 of which were initiatives, none military. Two patterns in U.S. activity emerged: (1) conciliatory verbal initiatives from North Vietnam met nonconciliatory *actions* from the U.S.; (2) conciliatory *verbal* initiatives from the U.S. were followed by nonconciliatory *actions* by the U.S.

On Jan. 1, for example, Hanoi proposed an extension of the 48-hour truce and Ambassador Goldberg said: "The United States welcomes an extension of the cease fire." The next day, only three hours after the truce had ended, U.S. planes were bombing the Demilitarized Zone. On Feb. 5, Hanoi rescinded earlier demands and announced that the opening of peace talks depended only on the cessation of U.S. bombing. Contacts were made in anticipation of the 96-hour Lunar Truce to begin Feb. 8. But on Feb. 6, the U.S. forces in the field launched a major offensive and made record air strikes in South Vietnam. One minute after the truce had ended, B-52's, in the air for hours, rained bombs on unseen targets. Ho Chi Minh sent a radio message to Pope Paul asking an end to the bombing. One hour later, U.S. bombers struck North Vietnam. North Vietnamese peace bids on Feb. 16, 18 and 22 were met by increased bombings, the "largest offensive yet in the Vietnamese war," the first artillery fire into North Vietnam, the mining of North Vietnamese rivers, and the violation of international waters by warships moving within 200 yards of shore to shell targets in North Vietnam.

On Feb. 9-10, negotiations between Prime Minister Wilson and Premier Kosygin had brought, in Wilson's words, "peace within our grasp." On Feb. 8, the bombing had stopped. Kosygin left London on Feb. 12; the next day the bombing was resumed.

What is the point of the bombing? On April 7, President Johnson pictured it as diplomatic "leverage": "I wish it were possible to convince others with words of what we now find necessary to say with guns and planes." The recurrent justification for the bombing has not been military but diplomatic; the bombing "raises the cost" of intransigence. What has the United States asked in return? On Jan. 5, it was a "reciprocal move toward peace"; on Jan. 6, "a reciprocal action"; and on Feb. 2, "just almost any action . . . just almost any reciprocal move." On Feb. 9, Secretary Rusk (one hour after the Wilson-Kosygin talks) asked on television that North Vietnam "reduce its military effort in South Vietnam." The U.S., in short, began to bomb in order to force North Vietnam to the peace table. When Hanoi began to talk about peace on

condition that the bombing stop, the U.S. asked for some vague *further sign*—and meanwhile intensified offensive operations.

It seems quite plain that the U.S. does not want to stop the fighting and begin to talk, but wishes instead to gain military concessions *before* any cessation of the bombing. Beyond this, Secretary Rusk and President Johnson have laid down the following guidelines for a future settlement: (1) an end to "aggression" from the North; (2) the political separation of South Vietnam from North Vietnam; (3) the guaranteed independence of South Vietnam from North Vietnam; (4) the "freedom" and stability of South Vietnam.

It is instructive, however, to notice what these claims must look like from the point of view of Hanoi. In the first place, the Geneva Accords of 1954 specified clearly that the division of South Vietnam from North Vietnam was to be neither political nor permanent. Vietnam, North and South together, has been and is supposed to be as one indivisible nation. Thus, secondly, the troops from Hanoi, let alone the Viet Cong, can hardly see themselves as "aggressors" in their own land; quite clearly, the foreigners are the Americans and their allies. Thirdly, South Vietnam hardly looks to Hanoi like an "independent" nation; it seems quite clearly to be an American dependency, financially, militarily and politically. It seems plain that but for the massive U.S. military intervention in 1965, South Vietnam would by now have had to accept a new government which would have, at a minimum, included members of the National Liberation Front. Finally, the supposed "freedom" given to

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South Vietnam by the United States appears to have already taken the form of a military dictatorship and the reinforcement of the interests of the hereditary mandarin caste which has long played upon the miseries of the Vietnamese people. Premier Ky is an avowed militarist; he calls effort for peace treasonable, and openly mocks the electoral process.

Yet the United States' interests in South Vietnam are not exhausted by the four claims made public by President Johnson and Dean Rusk. With every American soldier who has been killed or been crippled in Vietnam, American emotional stakes in the war have risen. The buddies of every fallen man, his family and the public as a whole are impelled to ask "that these honored dead will not have died in vain." Thus the U.S. government cannot face the realities of Vietnam truthfully. It cannot admit that the war is largely a civil war. It cannot admit that the government it supports is not a free government. It cannot even admit that its generals are committing blunder after blunder, so that our military efforts are, despite the grander noises, as ineffective as those of the South Vietnamese armies ever were. The guerrillas lure the American behemoth into remote jungle areas (ambushing troops at will), so that after two years of massive American presence the extent of politically secured areas is no larger, perhaps smaller, than it was before the Americans arrived. Meanwhile, civilian workers in the field report, hatred for Americans grows daily in once friendly villages.

"Peace with honor," President Johnson urges. Honor appears to mean the abject surrender of our opponents, an agreement to mutilate their own nation by dividing it, the acceptance of a tyrannical general allied to mandarin interests as ruler of half the land, and the betrayal of a nationalist dream for which scores of thousands have laid down their lives for over 20 years. It is obvious that honor has a different meaning in Hanoi and in the jungle headquarters of the NLF, as it once had in Washington.

"No matter what the decision of the Constituent Assembly, the 1967 Presidential election in South Vietnam was a fraud before it took place. In the first place, the Thieu-Ky ticket was illegal."

EXERCISE IN DECEPTION

TRAN VAN DINH

For the seventh time since Vietnam was temporarily divided by the 1954 Geneva Agreements, the people of South Vietnam, on Sept. 3, went to the polls (there were presidential elections in 1955 and 1961; Assembly elections in 1956, 1959, 1963 and 1066). Some 4,877,083 voters—83.3 percent of the eligible electorate—proceeded to 8,824 polling places to elect a President, a Vice President and 60 senators. The figures seems impressive, but, as the New York *Times'* Tom Wicker noted, the 83.3 percent represented less than a third of the nation, the rest having been disqualified as neutralists or Communists or residents of insecure areas outside the reach of Saigon.

The Sept. 3 voter, who has had enough of bullets and ballots in the last 22 years, was handed 11 ballots—one for each presidential ticket (two names on each, President and Vice President); then he was given 48 other ballots—one for each senatorial slate (10 names on each). Thus he had to go over 502 names and scrutinize 59 symbols (11 presidential; 48 senatorial). Many Vietnamese are illiterate; those who do read would have had to have taken a speed-reading course to fulfill their duty. Consider Kien Hoa province in the Delta, with 120,000 registered voters and 161 polling stations: voters there

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would have had to have been processed at the rate of 82 per hour, or 42 seconds per voter.

The voter did not care. His attention was directed at the familiar face of the policeman who controlled the polling booth. General Nguyen Ngoc Loan, head of the national police force and a close associate of Nguyen Cao Ky, had declared in a press conference in Saigon on Aug. 22: "National policemen will be stationed inside and outside booths all over the country. As the national police are the people in closest contact with the lowest echelon, there will be police telling them where to vote, how to vote and when to vote." The policeman also stamped the voter's registration card and anyone subsequently searched (a routine in South Vietnam) and found without the election day stamp on his card would be in danger of prison and even death. Finally, no matter for whom he voted, the voter knew from past experiences that the government candidates would win.

The Thieu-Ky ticket won, as expected, by 34.8 percent of the votes. But General Nguyen Van Thieu was defeated by 5,000 votes in Saigon, where people by and large are more aware of the issues. The front runner in Saigon was Tran Van Huong, former mayor and prime minister and a man respected for his honesty and austerity. Strangely enough, Mr. Huong lost in his home province, Vinh Long, where the local administration had all means to influence or threaten the voters.

The surprise of the elections was peace candidate Truong Dinh Dzu, who made a white dove his symbol. His ticket ran second, followed by Tran Van Huong and Phan Khac Suu, chairman of the Constituent Assembly. Final figures showed opponents of the Thieu-Ky ticket polling an aggregate of 3,086,843 votes, almost two-thirds more than Thieu-Ky attracted. Dr. Dzu's total was 817,120, a figure which, if soberly taken into account, should keep the peace issue in the forefront of Vietnamese politics. Complaints of fraud are being filed with the Assembly (some polls opened late; some ran out of ballots, etc.); the Assembly has until Oct. 2 to consider these and certify the validity of the elections.

No matter what will be the decision of the Assembly, the 1967 Presidential election in South Vietnam was a fraud before it took place. In the first place, the Thieu-Ky ticket was illegal. Article 17 of Electoral Law No 001/67 stipulates: "Government employees and military men, to run for elections, must file and take a leave of absence without pay beginning the closing date of application for the candidacy until the end of election day." Although General Thieu and Vice Air Marshal Ky claimed they had asked for a leave of absence, they remained as government employees and men in power.

There were other travesties. On the eve of the elections, two newspapers, *Than Chung* (Sacred Bell) and *Sang* (Light), were closed down. Colonel Pham Van Lieu, former National Police Chief and a supporter of a rival candidate, and other officers were arrested. Thieu and Ky both used government facilities during the campaign. Also the Saigon regime excluded from the race the most serious competitors: General Duong Van Minh, in exile in Bangkok, and Dr. Au Truong Thanh, former Minister of Economy and Finance (1964-1966). All candidates closely connected with the Buddhists were barred. Finally, in one month the number of eligible voters jumped from 5,553,251 to 5,853,251. Said Tran Van Huong: "We are prolific in Vietnam but not that prolific." Admitted General Thieu: "Some soldiers have been given two voting cards."

As in the last elections, Washington was optimistic. Official spokesmen capitalized on the fact that the elections took place amidst Viet Cong sabotage. Did they really try? Wesley Pruden Jr. wrote from Saigon in the Sept. 4 *National Observer*: "Many here did not believe that Hanoi and the Viet Cong seriously tried to disrupt the election. There was, as usual, a long list of terrorist incidents during election week. But brutal death is an everyday Communist contribution to life in Vietnam. If terror had been the election tactic, the terror squad could have done a lot worse. The truth is that the Viet Cong have never put a hell of a lot of importance on this election, says one American here who has watched the long preparations for the campaign. This election and all the trappings have excited the Americans a lot more than the Vietnamese."

The real loser in the elections is Vice Air Marshal Ky. As an elected Vice President, he will have to give up his functions as Prime Minister and his command of the South Vietnam Air Force. These two positions have made him the most powerful man in the military junta. But since June 29, when he was forced by his fellow generals and by U.S. pressure to accept the number two spot on the presidential ticket with his rival General Thieu, Ky has been planning a comeback. He has openly declared that he is not going to be a "tea-drinking" Vice President, which is exactly what he should be according to Article 66 of the 1967 Constitution of South Vietnam. Article 66 reads: "1. The Vice President is chairman of the Culture and Educational Council, the Economic Council, the Social Council and the Ethnic Minority Council. 2. The Vice President CANNOT hold any other position in the government."

Ky, cunning, ambitious but talkative, has mapped his strategy carefully. He relies for strength on the 90,000-strong police force headed by General Loan, a Northerner and an Air Force officer. On July 16, four C47 planes brought to the mountain resort of Dalat province police chiefs (43 in all) for a conference, followed by a dinner-dance at the Lang Bian Palace with Ky and Loan. Only one "outsider" took part in the meeting: Bui Diem, South Vietnam Ambassador to the U.S. and a close associate of Ky for years. Bui Diem would give Ky the readings of Washington policies, the knowledge of which is vital; he would have told Ky that the mood in the U.S.

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was for more war. This was reflected in Ky's statements during the campaign. While Thieu, who reads the Vietnam mood, called for cessation of bombings of the North and negotiations with Hanoi (he even declared he is "ready to meet with official representatives of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam"), Ky called for more bombings.

At Ky's instigation, the senior officers of the ARVN (Army Republic of Vietnam) formed a "military committee" to act as a kitchen cabinet for the future government. To upset Ky's maneuver, General Thieu announced in a press conference on Aug. 25, that "some general officers and high ranking colonels will be purged. Some of them will be discharged from the army, others will be brought before the Disciplinary Council." It remains to be seen if Thieu will carry out this purge, which would affect about 50 officers; it also remains to be seen how many of them are Ky's friends.

Depending on his strength, Ky could force the future parliament to amend the Constitution to enable the Vice President to take on the functions of Prime Minister, or he could simply overthrow Thieu and take his place as President. If, however, with the elections, Ky feels he is not strong enough, he can temporarily come to a compromise with Thieu and select a friend as a civilian Premier. Whatever, the elections will create more conflicts and divisions within the ARVN—and outside of it.

The most serious opposition is likely to come from the Buddhists. Since 1964, the Buddhists have struggled for the holding of elections which would be organized by an "interim government," not the military junta in power. Ruthlessly suppressed in the summer of 1966, Buddhists

were excluded from the presidential race. (Buddhists would have supported General Duong Van Minh or Dr. Au Truong Thanh.)

Moreover, in the midst of the elections preparations, General Thieu, a Catholic convert, signed Decree Law 23/67 abolishing the Buddhist Charter (approved by Decree Law I58/SL/CT of May 14, 1964). In a "free" and "democratic" South Vietnam, the majority religion functions under government-approved charter. The approval by General Thieu of the new charter violates article 32 of the 1964 Charter and article 35 of the revised 1966 Charter. These articles stipulate that all amendments and modifications must be discussed and approved by at least two-thirds of the delegates of the General Buddhist Assembly, composed of members of the Council of the Central Committee of the Church and representatives from regions and provinces all over the country. The new charter was proposed by only five Buddhists, one of them the so-called "moderate" Thich Tam Chau.

The reaction of the Buddhists was predictable. On Aug. 8, the Venerable Thich Tinh Khiet, Patriarch of the United Buddhist Church, wrote to General Thieu to protest against the promulgation of the New Charter. On Aug. 24, an extraordinary General Assembly of the United Buddhist Church met at the An Quang Pagoda and unanimously rejected the new charter. The same day Patriarch Thich Tinh Khiet cabled Buddhist countries and Buddhist organizations abroad, and the Secretary General of the United Nations, to inform them of the decision of the Assembly.

A cable was also sent to the Pope, in which the Patriarch asked the Holy Father to intervene with those "who claim to be Catholic and yet engage themselves in destructive actions against religions." The cable mentioned the understanding and brotherhood existing between the Buddhist and the Catholic communities after the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963. For the present, the Buddhists are advised to be in a state of alertness and wait directions from the Patriarch.

As for the future of the war and the "pacification," I am in agreement with Lt. Colonel William Carson, head of the Marine Combined Action Program in Danang. Colonel Carson is quoted in the July 29 *Washington Post*: "The peasant sees that we are supporting a local government structure he knows to be corrupt. So he assumes that we are either stupid or implicated. And he decides that we are not stupid. As for the elections, if they provide the leadership and the Revolutionary Development Program does better than it has done in the past, then we have a chance. If not, we've had it. The ball game is over."

The elections have returned the same leadership, corrupt, inefficient, alien to the peasantry. Directed by the same people, the Revolutionary Development Program is not going to be any better, but the game is not over. The elections were an exercise of deception to the American public. The Vietnamese peasants, after 22 years of war and betrayed revolutions, cannot be deceived.

The 22-man observation group sent by President Johnson has passed a favorable verdict. They did so after a few days in Vietnam, as guests of the Saigon government, escorted by government interpreters and equipped with not even the rudiment of Vietnamese politics and Vietnamese culture. It is a mystery how they could watch over 8,000 polling places. But it doesn't matter. The elections were simply a process of legitimization of the Saigon military junta and the legalization of the U.S. intervention in South Vietnam.

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"There are few debts more heavy than the one America now owes the Vietnamese. Are we going to pay by bombing, searching, destroying, pacifying, and rooting out, for fifteen years?"

THE CASE FOR WITHDRAWAL

PETER STEINFELS

The U.S. is pursuing "rollback" in Southeast Asia, a policy it has largely disavowed in the rest of the world. First practically and only later rhetorically, the U.S. decided that in Eastern Europe Communist regimes were a fact of life. We might deplore them, we might argue that they did not represent the majorities in their nations, we might suspend or grant aid in hope of encouraging a different sort of Communist regime, we might even hope for a future for these areas not at all recognizable as Communist. But we gave up the idea of attaining our aims by armed invasion.

In Vietnam the U.S. has attempted "rollback" at least twice. In 1954 Washington decided to reverse the outcome of the Indochinese war by ignoring the Geneva agreements and by supporting an anti-Communist satellite state in the South. In 1965 Washington attempted to offset the virtually total military and political collapse of that satellite state by raining bombs on North Vietnam and sending a massive expeditionary force into Asia. On both occasions our own statesmen were of the opinion that for various reasons, many of them historically unique and by no means the doing of the U.S., the Communist-led forces had won the day and effective control of the country was all but in their hands.

Into this gap between almost certain possibility and actual accomplishment, the U.S. inserted its direct intervention; our temporary successes masked from us what we were doing. Gambling on "rollback" in 1954, we later refused to admit that we had lost the wager—and gambled again. There has been no nuclear war, yet. Otherwise, the results have been as disastrous as anything we could have feared in Eastern Europe.

While the United States is occupied in Southeast Asia, international relations have reached a critical stage. Like the 1860's when Germany was unified or 1919 when old empires crumbled and the U.S. and Russia temporarily withdrew from Europe, today the emergence of China and of national Communism, the revival of Europe, the detente with Russia, the possibility of an international system vastly and irreversibly altered by nuclear proliferation, together these factors present one of those determining moments for the next decades of international relations. A similar point has been reached in developing lands and American cities, where continuing misery in the face of wealth has raised frustration to a revolutionary pitch. At such a moment, the world's greatest power is exhausting vast resources, economic, military and political, on a local war which is taking a toll worse than did Hanoi's cruel purges and which will, moreover, increase the very wartime terror and postwar bloodletting the war is meant to prevent. Simply put, the war in Vietnam is doing more harm—to the Vietnamese, to world peace, to America itself—than would even a Communist regime in Saigon.

This is the conclusion which underlies any call for American withdrawal. The United States must recognize the failure of its "rollback" and radically reverse its priorities. Those priorities now line up: (1) prevention of a Communist regime in the South; (2) ameliorative measures to minimize Vietnamese suffering; (3) ending the war. The order should be reversed: (1) ending the war; (2) ameliorative measures to minimize suffering; (3) prevention of a Communist regime.

The implications of such a reversal are that the U.S. would immediately try to obtain Hanoi and Vietcong agreement to a non-Communist coalition government in the South including Communist elements. If agreement could not be reached, the U.S. *should lower its demands,* to a coalition government in which the Communist ele-

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ments would be stronger or even dominating. As part of the agreement, the various sides must guarantee measures to minimize the reprisals and postwar suffering: population movements; medical and economic assistance; U.N. or Red Cross observation units; phased withdrawal of American troops (presenting the unstated threat of a reversal of policy if reprisals went beyond the horrible minimum which can be realistically expected); or whatever ingenuity and a percentage of the billions now spent on the war can devise.

Hanoi and the N.L.F. may accept the first offer which presents at least a possibility of their future control of Vietnam; they may fear that such an offer, if refused, will only be followed by a hardening of U.S. policy. Or they may hold out for assurances of almost complete power from the start. America should consider the former eventuality a fortunate bonus, the latter outcome the just consequence of our failure. In either case, ending the war and employing every non-military means we can devise to limit Vietnamese suffering are higher priorities.

These, I realize, are radical proposals. They arise, however, from a radically deranged situation: to "lose" this war today would be better for the world, the U.S. and Vietnam than to "win" it fifteen years from now. I put the words "win" and "lose" in quotation marks because in Vietnam their simple meaning has been strained to the breaking point.

The Alternatives

A willingness to enlarge the bait until Hanoi and the N.L.F. bite adds up to the policy sometimes termed "withdrawal." Mention this word out loud, and you will usually receive three objections: "But the situation is complicated!" "But are you against negotiations?" "But we can't just abandon the Vietnamese."

Each of these objections has some basis. For some people, no doubt, the proposal to make an end to the war our overriding priority is an escape from the burden of complexity. Like the advocate of bombing North Vietnam back into the Stone Age, they merely want to "get finished with it." They forget that an American withdrawal won't make Vietnam or Southeast Asia or China disappear. (Or the State Department and the Pentagon, for that matter.) The problem is foreign *relations,* not foreign *events,* and these are long-term matters.

Still, to cry "complexity" is no unanswerable objection to withdrawal. Given, in fact, the full complexity of the situation and the drawbacks of every alternative, withdrawal may be the best of a bad lot, the lesser of evils. "Complexity" is certainly no argument for the present policy in Vietnam, except in the sense that attempting surgery with a cleaver is guaranteed to produce awesome complications. Is complexity on the side of any of the other alternatives?

Many answer that it is on the side of "negotiations," and the critics of the war can be roughly divided between advocates of a negotiated settlement and advocates of withdrawal. The antagonism between these groups is surprising, because any casual observer will note that their objectives are neither self-explanatory nor mutually exclusive. If the U.S., having reversed its priorities, were determined to withdraw, nothing would be easier than to arrange negotiations to formalize the process. On the other hand, almost every scheme for negotiations now in the public arena, including the State Department's, looks forward to some process of eventual withdrawal. There are, of course, those who would like to force Hanoi to sign what amounts to a surrender; and there are those

who would savor some sort of American Dunkirk. Both groups sometimes cloak their desires with the terms "negotiations" or "withdrawal." But generally, serious critics of the war desire some combination of negotiations and withdrawal. And most of them realize that phrases like *"unconditional* negotiations" and *"immediate* withdrawal" are hyperbolic impossibilities. Neither Hanoi nor Washington will begin negotiations without *some* idea of what may emerge, and this constitutes a condition. No withdrawal could be accomplished in such a blink of the eye as to avoid decisions concerning the future rulers of Vietnam, and this constitutes an implicit or explicit form of negotiation.

The two formulas, then, are not dichotomous, but expressions of relative differences. The negotiator may feel there is still a good chance for a peaceful and non-Communist South Vietnam, led by the Buddhists or another "third way" group. Much as the withdrawer might prefer such a settlement, a Vietnam free of both war and Communism, he doubts whether it is any longer possible. The non-Communist forces in Vietnam are too weak, too local, too divided, or too unpopular to survive long without the American military prop. To insist absolutely on a non-Communist solution is to insist on a Vietnam at war.

The negotiator wants Hanoi and the Vietcong to "be reasonable" and come halfway, and he has faith that they would, if given a chance by Washington. The withdrawer doubts that "being reasonable" can mean the same thing for a revolutionary group fighting in its homeland as for a great power. Once again, he might prefer to see Hanoi

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and the Vietcong come halfway, but he doesn't want to depend on it.

The negotiator hopes that the very process of negotiations, once initiated, will lead to a lowering of American aims. The withdrawer fears that only a lowering of aims, a reversal of American priorities, will lead to the initiation of successful negotiations. He knows that, unless linked to a will to end the war, many of the negotiator's proposals—to start talks or de-escalate the war—can be manipulated for government purposes, either to cast responsibility for the war on Hanoi or to reduce the war effort to a level more acceptable to the American electorate. The withdrawer is aware that the hawks are watching like . . . hawks. And that the U.S. will not be pressed by any bargaining process into concessions its leaders are not completely prepared to defend. It will take a firm act of political will power to extricate us from Vietnam; it probably cannot be done on the sly, or on the cheap. Beyond the problem of raising public support for beginning talks, the withdrawer senses the need for public recognition of the price to be paid if talks are actually to occur and be successful. No new illusions for the old, please. The withdrawer is a dove, but a hardnosed one.

But another objection remains. If our first priority becomes ending the war rather than containing the Communists, are we abandoning the Vietnamese?

Not that America's concern for the Vietnamese has ever been overriding: we paid for the war of their colonial masters, tolerated the corruption of their ruling elites, and supported the oppression of their mandarin leaders. There are many ways to abandon a people. For two decades the Vietnamese have been abandoned to civil strife, military destruction, national division, individual suffering. We have pledged our willingness to abandon them, if necessary, to a vast war between American armies and hordes of their ancient Chinese oppressors. One of our ex-Presidents has approved of abandoning them, if necessary, to the pleasures of atomic weapons. The Vietnamese are being abandoned to American needs and notions today, have been so abandoned for a decade past, and may be so abandoned for years to come.

Let us not be hypocritical. There are few debts heavier than the one America now owes the Vietnamese. Are we going to pay by bombing, searching, destroying, pacifying, and rooting out, for fifteen years? Or will we, at last, *stop* abandoning Vietnam?

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ROOM WITH NO VIEW

THE SCREEN

Even American moviegoers who aren't enthusiastic about foreign films have to admit that they often say something worth paying attention to. And even an unpopular film maker like Luis Bunuel, whose 1962 "The Exterminating Angel" was shown at the New York Film Festival four years ago, should interest audiences enough in that movie, which is now in general release, to make them baffled and angry. I suppose "Angel" would be called an allegory as it tells a tale of some 20 swanky upper-class guests who find themselves trapped in the living room of an elegant Mexico City house after a dinner party. Comes going-home time and nobody goes. Comes bedtime, and they can't even get out of the room. No explanation; and they're stuck for day after day after day. Hungry, dirty, disheveled, overtired, and with their defenses down, these no-longer-swanky socialites and their host and hostess bicker and quarrel among themselves and show themselves at their worst—although their worst was probably there all the time under a veneer of high-class customs and breeding.

All the servants except the butler had the good sense or intuition to desert the house at the beginning of the dinner party; and the butler, also confined now in the room, seems best able to cope with the mystifying and undignified situation. But in castigating modern society, Bunuel, whose script stems from a stage play by José Benjamin, is not just retelling another version of "The Admirable Crichton," James Barrie's play about a butler and a group of rich castaways which has already been made into two films, most famous of which was DeMille's "Male and Female." Bunuel's butler may be the most practical person in this confining room (he even eats some paper doilies as he and the other kids used to do when they were bored at their Jesuit school), but some of the others, particularly the host and a doctor, turn out to be fairly decent people while most of the prisoners display their meanness, their superstitions, their base emotions. One grouchy old cardiac says before he dies that he's glad he at least won't be here to see the exterminating. The butler has sense enough to break a pipe so they have water. And when three of the hostess' sheep wander into the room, the butler knows how to cook them. But the days continue to pass. No one can get out and no one can get in. A crowd collects outside the mansion, including an abbé who brings four children belonging to one of the inside couples to see the place where their parents are confined.

While the performances in "The Exterminating Angel" are not particularly distinguished, Bunuel's direction is good and the main theme is fascinating. In spite of the film's foreword by Bunuel himself, the film must have meanings and explanations. In part the foreword reads: "If the film you are about to see seems puzzling or even disturbing, it is so because frequently so is life itself. The author declares he did not wish to present any symbols, at least not consciously. . . . The best explanation of this film is that, from the standpoint of pure reason, there is no explanation." Then why did you do some of the things you did, Mr. Bunuel?

Finally the confined group get out by restaging the last events and words that were done and said before the charm started in the room. The spell is broken, the servants go in, and the beaten guests come out. A few days later they are attending the promised Te Deum, and as they are about to leave the church, once again they are all held prisoner—this time they and the priests. And the final shot shows a lot of sheep going into the church. Are the people going to be held for a long time, so they'll need these sheep for food? Or are these church-going people just sheep who follow the past without giving thought?

Bunuel, who is an atheist, cannot dignify Christians by arguing with their God in whom he does not believe; but he can argue with Christians by wondering if Christianity works as he watches his characters behave so basely. With some of their behavior, he has a point for condemnation. He offers no solutions, and even his questions don't show complete understanding of Christianity. But his questions are not dull. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

JUSTIN PASCHAL, F.S.C.

THE CREATIVE WRITERS

My creative writers are at it again.
It is a matching game, and they play
With eyes on the brownstones, the crusted
Stairways, the broken doors, the remainders
Of men who sit on the landings
Eyes shut to the sun of September.

They match a word with windows or rather
The grime that marks them.
They move out to rust and charred brick
And the chimneys that break the free
And unmatchable blue,
And they jingle their words like coins
In this game of seeking and matching.

But one sits apart from the game, and weary
Of matching, watches the bearded prophet
Who stands beyond the tenements.
His prophet stands there in shambles,
Tenderly lifting the stones
Of the city he loved and chided.

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BOOKS

The Cool Millennium

GERALD SYKES

Prentice-Hall, $5.95

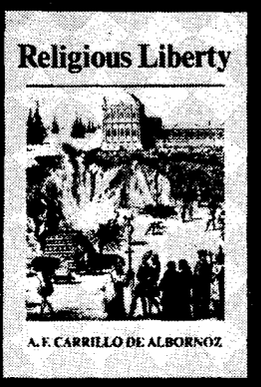
WALTER J. ONG

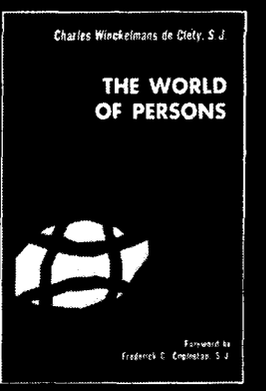
Gerald Sykes' new book is a relentless and delightful meditation on contemporary civilization, the spreading technological millennium which "seems to have no serious opposition and may well dominate the next thousand years," offering more and more people "more power, more safety, more comfort than they ever had before" if they will only follow the line of least resistance.

Pseudo-imaginative projections of what technological society might finally be like have often presented it as a mass society of robots, with machine-like reactions to overstandardized stimuli. Back of such projections lie lines of thought which are persuasive largely because they are grossly simple: technology produces countless machines, hence you relate it to man by supposing that it finally makes him a machine, too. Of course, this is not what happens. Technology restructures man's psyche and his life world not in robot-like simplicity but in greater and greater complexity. The complexity induces a state of terror. This in turn leads not to playing at being a machine but to "playing it cool," the typical response of technological man which none of the doomsday analysts appears to have foreseen.

Playing it cool is not all bad, Gerald Sykes points out. At least it is better than "the glandular affirmations of the positive thinkers" and the "canny negativism of the Beats." At a given moment, particularly if you are young, "keeping your cool" may be instinctive wisdom, if it does not end up as only "a new kind of mackintosh for the mind." But it is no more than a temporizing device. Eventually even in a technological society we have to descend into the maelstrom of life.

The Cool Millennium aids in the descent. It is written, Sykes says, "for stu-





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dents," which means in effect for those wanting to enter into the actuality of existence today with as full reflectiveness and self-awareness as possible. The author undertakes to reveal the technological state of mind to itself, to force us to look at some of the structures we are going to have to live with or indeed are already living with. Rightly, he believes that this undertaking is not easy, since the state of mind which society today induces is in fact "hidden by a censorship that makes the sexual censorship of the Victorians as revealed by Freud, seem paper-thin."

To open our mind to itself, Sykes undertakes what other sensitive educators today know must be undertaken: he brings the living thought of the past and the live present into contact with one another. This means not only relating Socrates, the Troubadours and Elizabethans, Descartes and Marx, to Freud and Binswanger, Heidegger, Samuel Beckett and Siegfried Giedion, but also —since ours is the first age capable of understanding its own popular culture with something like requisite anthropological depth—relating the work of such writers, past and present, to the mass media and popular ideologies and images of our day.

Sykes discusses, for example, how and why the French differ from Americans in their avowed attitudes toward technology but also at the same time covertly agree. He shows how knowledge is debased by considering it as power, how intellectuals tend to abandon their duty to the marketplace and how the marketplace commonly though not necessarily corrupts intellects. One of his typical analyses shows how the avant-garde corrupted itself, by turning shock production into a big business: inevitable outcome in a technological world.

Insensitive readers will be mystified by Sykes' tactics: Whose side is he on? His discussion not only of art but of desacralization, of commercialism, of teamwork, and of living by ideology rather than by thought and ideals, leaves one with no simple answers. How could it? For Sykes takes life as it is, full of complex interactions between variously contending forces.

Sykes catches the complexities in a basic dialectic on which he structures much of this book. Men of the technological age divide into "Aztechs" (men of action, as the Aztec politicians of early Mexico were) and "Toltechs" (men of thought, as the master craftsmen Toltecs of Mexico had been). Sykes identifies two corresponding characters in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, Lopakhin (an Aztech) and Trifimov (a Toltech), to whom he assimilates two present-day students in a university class of his. With these students as half-unpredictable foils, he spins a narrative which is both entertaining and philosophically serious. Neither the Aztech, plump, vigorous, well-groomed, nor the Toltech, lean, melancholy, antisocial in dress and demeanor but far more understanding than the Aztech, can find much comfort in Sykensianism. His vision allows no unilateral solution: it accepts the irreducible dualism of man's frames of reference and modes of behavior.

"Organization Men don't count," the Toltech student insists to the author after one class session. Sykes, who is patently more sympathetic to Toltechs than to Aztechs, nevertheless reminds his Trifimov type, "They run the world don't they?" But the Toltech student rejoins, "I can get along without them." "Well, I can't," the teacher counters, "I need them. What's more, I admire them," and he cites Flaubert, another Toltech, "*Ils sont dans le vrai.*"

The responsive two-sidedness of Sykes' vision manifests not a wishy-washy relativism but wry and affirmative sanity and strength. More real and supple than Jacques Ellul's, more real and less sanctimonious than Sartre's, his understanding of technology is not overprogrammed: it is Toltech and Aztech simultaneously. The author, who has lived for long periods in many other countries and done so with empathy and graceful human rapport and who is vigorously critical of his own United States, here

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REVIEWER

FATHER WALTER J. ONG, S.J., has dealt with the problems of contemporary civilization in several books, most recently *In the Human Grain* (Macmillan).

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profits from his American heritage. A typical United States intellectual of Ellul's or Sartre's generation has access to technology from the inside in ways normally closed to most of his European counterparts: before he has finished college, the American will very likely have held down a half-dozen or more jobs in the technologized commercial milieu which is the United States. How many such jobs Sykes has held I do not know, but it is evident that he feels *engagé à la américaine*, if discriminatingly so.

Beneath Sykes' interpretation of technology there lies an experienced wisdom. He is quite obviously aware that the vast new increment of knowledge which marks our age not only in science and technology but in the humanities and social subjects as well, as a matter of fact gives not the slightest promise of shedding any new light at all on the basic questions of existence: What is existence all about? Why am I here? Why are you? In terms of the universe as a whole, what is going on? We are living in a vastly improved society where the improvements may be incidentally helpful but are all profoundly irrelevant.

Human and moral values are still under threat. Gerald Sykes undertakes to preserve them. The great fear haunting youth today, he points out, is not that they will be destroyed by the atom bomb but that they will not be able to lead good lives. Now, as always, neither optimism nor pessimism will do. Optimism and pessimism really have little relationship to actuality. Hope does. And this is decidedly a hopeful book. But hope is not a relaxing virtue. It keeps you on edge.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 563)

may have been making up his mind) and claims it after entry, the credibility of his claim is weak, since such apparently sudden conversions look to a military eye to be based on weakness and cowardice aroused by the conditions in basic training.

Also, the "greater good" would be under consideration on the principle that letting one "get away with it" the rest would all turn "coward." To a less cynical view, the opposite position would perhaps be plausible, that some persons sincerely think their participation in war an act of irreconcilable evil, no matter *when* they decide on this position. Besides, it never seems to occur to the "toughminded" that confrontation with the actual military might arouse a man's conscience as easily as his fear of physical harm.

As a former administrative officer in a Basic Combat Training Brigade, I helped to process cases where almost complete illiteracy or the dilemma of the "former claim clause" appeared to weigh heavily enough to tip the balance of scales already in virtual imbalance against the claimant. As a result, some of the most obviously sincere pacifists' claims were not honored, with the result of subsequent court martial and jail (up to two years in Leavenworth), because inconsistent regulations prohibit a full and complete appraisal of individual cases. And disparate theologies did not begin to make a difference.

WILLIAM O. KERR, JR.
Philosophy Dept.
University of Santa Clara

A Supporting Voice

Cedar Rapids, Ia.

To the Editors: Mr. Novak ("Draft Board Theology," July 28) has said it all! The United States does cherish its outmoded myth of anti-Communism far more than it does peace. The United States will sacrifice human life and dignity for this "thing"—this mythical interpretation, this manifestation of an irrational anxiety fostered by a people haunted by a phantom, a people who are becoming irrational creatures themselves.

I, along with Mr. Novak, would like to join those who aid, abet and encourage young men to resist the draft. In order to share the burden of an unjust draft law, I add my name along with the fervent hope that our national conscience is soon restored to a state of rationality.

SALLY H. MADDEN

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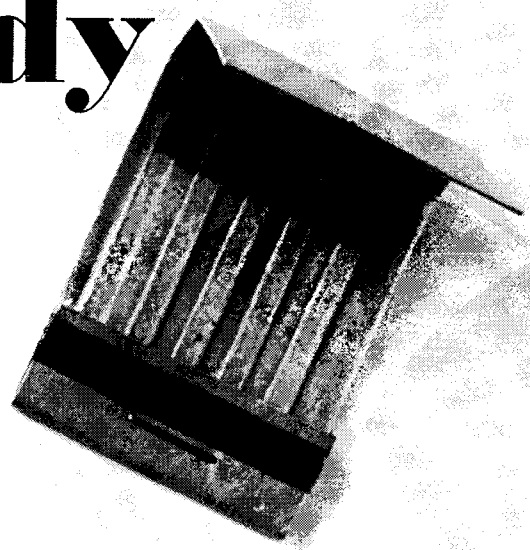

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